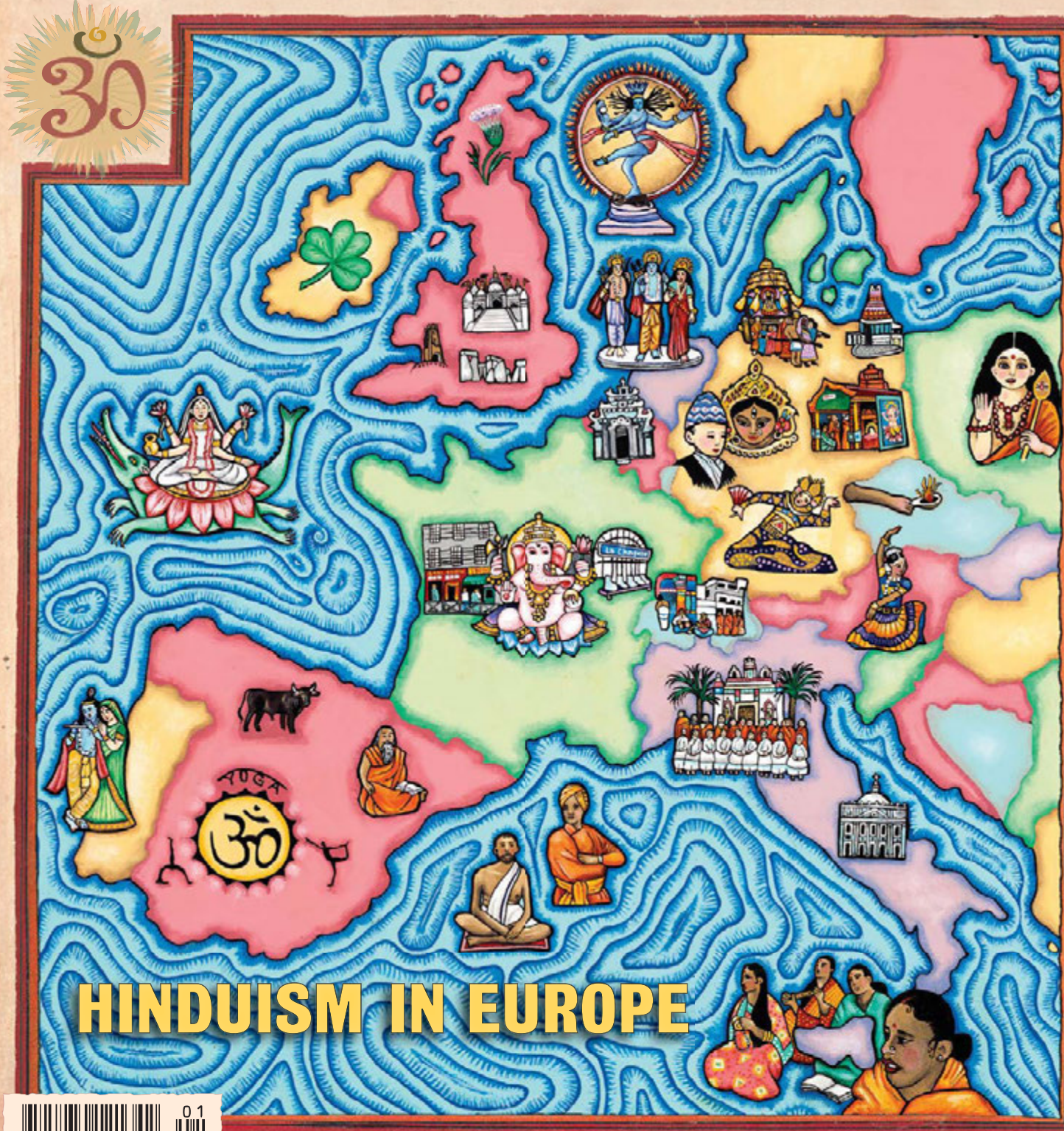


HINDUISM TODAY

Affirming Sanatana Dharma and Recording the Modern History of a Billion-Strong Global Religion in Renaissance



HINDUISM IN EUROPE

LYNDA MCCLANAHAN



COVER: An illustrated map showing Hinduism's largely unknown presence throughout Europe; (above) head acharya Arun Bhaskar, assisted by Mr. Vishnu, conducts a priest training class at the Nair Service Society Thantra Vidhyapeedom in Kerala, South India.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH, 2014 • THE HINDU YEAR VIJAYA, 5114

Bodhinatha Veylanswami www.gurudeva.org

INTERNATIONAL

- Feature:** The Little-Known Proliferation of Hinduism Throughout Continental Europe **18**
Training: Kerala Devises a Solution to the Shortage of Competent Temple Priests **54**
Leadership: Leaders from 21 Countries Convene in Bali to Define the Future of their Faith **56**
Hindu of the Year: We Honor Siddhaganga's 106-year-old Dr. Shivakumar Swami **61**

LIFESTYLE

- Insight:** Fourteen Enlightening Lessons to Help You Know Thyself **38**
Health: One Canadian Doctor's Mission to Bring Hindu Sensibilities to End-of-Life Care **58**
Dance: A Croatian Living in Delhi Has Dedicated Her Life to Teach and Preserve Bharatanatyam **62**

OPINION

- In My Opinion:** Arjun Daswani Discovers the Power of Initiation by Touch, Sight and Voice **9**
Publisher's Desk: A Ten-Minute Spiritual Workout Designed for Today's Overly Busy Life **10**
Letters **12**
From the Agamas: Can Your Dreams Portend Your Future? **17**
Music: Meet Chandrika Tandon, Grammy-Nominated Musician and Renaissance Woman **66**
Opinion: Maria Wirth Questions: Why Can't We Call India a Hindu Nation? **70**

DIGESTS

- Global Dharma** **6**
Quotes & Quips **14**
Digital Dharma **86**

Letters to the editor, subscription and editorial inquiries may be sent to HINDUISM TODAY, 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii 96746-9304 USA, letters@hindu.org. HINDUISM TODAY (ISSN# 0896-0801; USPS# 023082), January/February/March 2014, Volume 36, No. 1. Editorial: 1-808-822-7032; subscriptions from USA and Canada 1-877-255-1540; subscriptions, copies or bulk orders from other countries 1-808-240-3109; subscribe@hindu.org; advertising: 1-888-464-1008, ads@hindu.org. All-department fax: 1-808-822-4351. HINDUISM TODAY is published four times a year in January, April, July and October by Himalayan Academy, a nonprofit educational institution at 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii 96746-9304 USA. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, Founder; Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, Publisher; Paramacharya Sadasivanatha Palaniswami, Editor-in-Chief. USA subscriptions: US\$35/1 year, \$65/2 years, \$95/3 years, \$155/5 years, \$1,001/lifetime. Contact us for international rates. In Malaysia: Sanathana Dharma Publications, Kovind Enterprise, No. 17, Jalan Ungu U9/29, Sunway Kayangan, 40150 Shah Alam. Tel: 016-380-2393; E-mail: silvarajos@yahoo.com. In Singapore: Sanathana Dharma Publications, Blk 210 #06-326, Pasir Ris Street 21, 510210. Tel: 9664-9001; E-mail: dsam55@gmail.com. For permission to republish a HINDUISM TODAY article, e-mail letters@hindu.org or fax 1-808-822-4351. Printed in USA. Periodicals postage paid at Kapaa, Hawaii, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HINDUISM TODAY, 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii, 96746-9304.

© 2014 HIMALAYAN ACADEMY, 107 KAHOLALELE ROAD, KAPAA, HAWAII 96746-9304 USA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



www.hinduismtoday.com



Best Hindu Magazine

Brazil BRL 14
Canada CAD 10

India INR 115
Malaysia MYR 14

Mauritius MRU 115
Singapore SGD 10

Trinidad TTD 48
UK GBP 5





Temples Rise in Europe

Berlin's Newest Mandir: *An artist adorns the rajagopuram of the Sri Mayurapathy Murugan Tempel in Berlin, Germany, consecrated on September 8, 2013. The painter does not work from a plan, but relies on years of experience and his artistic sensibilities, making each work unique. Article begins on page 18.*

GLOBAL DHARMA

BALI

Resuming a Colossal Work

IN AUGUST, 2013, HUNDREDS celebrated the recommencement of Bali's Garuda Wisnu Kencana statue construction. The project had been stalled for 16 years due to the country's political and economic hardships. The restart was made possible by a generous donor who contributed over US\$40,000,000.

Surrounded by a 600-acre cultural park, the statue is a pioneering and engineering feat of wonder. When complete and standing on its base, it will rise

to over 400 feet—100 feet taller than the Statue of Liberty.

Author of the work, master sculptor Nyoman Nuarta hopes to complete the project in three years. The 700-ton masterpiece is being made of copper and brass sheeting, cladding a stainless steel framework. The stated purpose of the GWK Cultural Park is to educate people, particularly youth, about the importance of preserving their rich cultural heritage.



Colossal creations: Currently the statue is in pieces—here, Garuda's head—which are placed around the park, awaiting the completion of the sculpture's many other titanic segments; (inset) artists depiction of the completed statue



Yo' wrap's message: A healthy vegetarian diet might identify you as a liberal and environmentalist, or perhaps a high-minded religious conservative. It all depends on where you live.

VEGETARIANISM

Meat-Free Identities

RECENTLY PUBLISHED STUDIES HAVE REVEALED SOME KEY differences in how people view vegetarianism in the East and the West. A group from the University of British Columbia polling subjects from India, Europe and North America learned that ethical considerations, such as animal welfare, were widely shared reasons for not eating meat. But the cultural identifications with vegetarianism were vastly different. Western vegetarians tended to renounce authoritarianism and identify with liberal world views—having gone against prevailing social currents by abstaining from meat. In contrast, Indian associated their diet with strong cultural and social values, asserting it as an important part of maintaining the body's purity, subjects, having been born in a vegetarian nation.

CANADA

Eighth Annual HMEC

HINDU REPRESENTITIVES OF 85 TEMPLES, FROM ALL across the United States and Canada, recently met for the eighth annual Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference. This year's event, held September 20–22 in Mississauga, Ontario, created a platform of communication and networking for Hindu temples. It fostered kindred associations and solutions to the many challenges being faced.

The event consisted of 23 sessions, with 115 speakers and moderators. Talks focused on temple management, pride in one's faith, culture and personal values as well as ways to engage youth in their religion and temple activities. Some of this year's most inspiring talks were given by Hindu youth, who—being raised in the West—are facing far different circumstances than their parents did growing up. HINDUISM TODAY's editors were among the keynote speakers.



Unity of purpose: Temple leaders all aim to promote and preserve their great faith. They enhance their communities by working together, learning from each others' challenges and solutions.

UNITED KINGDOM

Mandir Celebrates 25 years



Time to celebrate: Devotees dance to lively music, a mix of Bollywood with traditional garba, contemporary and rock

RUSSIA

Yoga's Unlikely History

OVER THE LAST DECADE there has been much news of yoga and Hindu thought becoming widespread in Russia. This rapid growth may look recent, but its roots stretch back to the mid 1500s, when Ivan the Terrible received Russia's first *Bhagavad Gita* from the Moghul Empire, according to a *Yoga Journal* article by Olga Kazak. The *Gita* was known and studied through the following centuries. Today the country's oldest copy is still archived in Moscow. Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* and works by Vivekananda became available in recent times.

Olga points out that Yoga was first popular among the nation's artistic communities, later becoming a refuge of hope under

Stalin's harsh rule. Faced with persecution for the practice of yoga, citizens did so in secret. It would play an important role for some trapped in prison camps. The Cold War era that followed romanticized yoga, as it helped influential thinkers and famous figures survive their heroic trials.

In contrast with yoga's gentle surge through the US, Russia's yoga movement was catalyzed by times of hardship. This history accounts for its popularity today as a courageous and noble practice. Appropriated by the nation's people during times of darkness and tyranny, yoga became, and still is, a statement of their unshakable inner freedom and unfettered spirit.



Popular poses: Russian students perform acrobatic yoga asanas in the streets of Moscow

THE 25-YEAR CELEBRATION OF the Nar Narayan Dev Gadi's Shree Swaminarayan Temple in Willesden, London, on July 19–27, 2013, drew 6,000 people from all over the UK for nine joyous days of worshipful music and dance.

Established in 1988, the temple has long been a center for Swaminarayan followers as well as a growing Hindu community who take part in its many classes and workshops, including music courses, language studies, youth camps and more.

One of the biggest highlights of the celebration was a street procession in which thousands

of people walked for over four hours, accompanied by beautiful floats, marching bands, dancers and bhajan singers. Many participants from the local community joined the jubilee couldn't help dancing to the uplifting beats. By the end of the nine days, devotees were filled with the event's unforgettable experiences.

Many of the festivities were organized by over 500 temple youth. This was a great way for the youth to honor the temple their parents had built, solidifying their faith, their community and their future.

THAILAND

An Elephantine Reputation



Plentiful Pillayar: One of many popular Ganeshas that grace the Nakhon Nayok Province of central Thailand

AMONG THAILAND'S 65 MILLION people—most of whom are Buddhists—one of Hinduism's most lovable Gods is gaining widespread popularity. This culturally rich nation, about the size of Spain, proudly presents itself as the only Southeast Asian nation to have never been colonized by European powers. The country's long-standing Buddhist traditions are supplemented by an array of knowledge pertaining to spirits, the elements and the Gods of other faiths—particularly Hinduism, which was the nation's principal religion before the spread of Buddhism.

Ganesha, once only popular among Thailand's artists and businessmen, has fast become a

familiar sight for all. Worshipped as Phra Pikanet or Phra Phikhanesawora, this benevolent God is known to bring good fortune and can be found just about everywhere. He is seen on shop counters and roadside shrines; businesses make sure to worship Him before beginning any undertaking. His rounded form is present at His most revered shrine, in the Royal Brahmin Temple in Bangkok. He is even found on the country's Ministry of Fine Arts emblem. He is particularly popular in the capital city of Bangkok, where Ganesha Chaturthi is celebrated each year with great enthusiasm. Perhaps nowhere in the world are there more non-Hindus worshipping a Hindu God.

Meditation, Incorporated

TODAY'S STRESS-INDUCING business world has become new ground for a growing interest in meditation throughout the United States. Thankfully, it doesn't seem to just be another passing fad. Many are spurred into the practice of meditation because of their demanding work or other related difficulties, but have found that the practice is more than just a tool to calm down. Simply put, when you take on the practice of going within yourself daily, regardless of the reasons, your view of life begins to change.

Meditation is being touted by CEOs and entrepreneurs as a new tool for success, according to an article in *Financial Times*. Many companies now offer classes to their employees aimed at decreasing stress and improving creativity and focus. Nowhere is this corporate meditation trend more popular than California's Silicon Valley, an epicenter for information technology and innovative advancements. One of the most obvious examples is Google, which has instituted a "Search Inside Yourself" program for employees.

Founded by Chade-Meng Tan, one of Google's earliest engineers, the program has been utilized by over a thousand employees, with hundreds more on the waiting list. The company has built a labyrinth for meditation walks and holds bimonthly "mindful lunches," conducted in complete silence.

Though many of Google's employees aren't religious or spiritual, plenty are happy to sit through the meditation classes led by Meng. With eyes closed, he tells the large group to imagine the goodness of everyone on the planet: "When you breathe in, breathe all that goodness into your heart. Using your heart, multiply that goodness by ten. When you breathe out, send that goodness to the whole world, and visualize yourself breathing out white light—brilliant white light." One employee would later say that when exhaling, "I actually feel a buzzing on the underside of my skull as I try to imagine pure love. For a minute, I forget that we're



An inspiring change: a man goes within himself before starting a business meeting, knowing that it can awaken ideas and help him focus

in a room ordinarily reserved for corporate presentations." Google, one of the world's most innovative and powerful IT companies, is a trend-setter, so expect more meditation in the workplace.

Like the common yoga classes, meditation in the workplace is being facilitated by a degraded outward association with religion. Whether considered good or bad, the practice is being marketed in a way that appeals to anyone, with its deepest aspects

remaining secret and sacred as they have throughout history. Today's popular courses advertise neural health, immune benefits, calmness and clarity, but make no mention of meditation's ultimate goal, Self realization. But you can bet that ardent practitioners in the corporate world and elsewhere, will inevitably find something beyond the goals of focus and productivity.

a monthly salary and be cared for by the temple management.

TO COMMEMORATE THE 150TH birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America held its World Without Borders event in Chicago, Illinois. Beginning on September 27, the two-day program was attended by several thousand. During the event, a letter from the Governor of Illinois, Pat Quinn, proclaimed September 28 Swami Vivekananda Day.

INDIA'S CENTRAL BANK HAS recently stirred up resistance and mistrust from several of the nation's richest temples by issuing letters asking for details of the gold in possession of the temples. Though they claim the inquiries are simply for data

collection, many devotees and temple trustees believe the bank may seek to use the massive gold reserves to alleviate India's current account deficit. Most temples have refused to divulge any details about their gold, stating that it has been gifted by devotees over thousands of years and belongs to the Deity.

Global Dharma
news provided by

**HINDU PRESS
INTERNATIONAL**

Subscribe to a free daily
news summary about
Hinduism worldwide at
hinduismtoday.com/hpi

PHOTO: WWW.LINKEDIN.COM



HINDUISM TODAY was founded on January 5, 1979, by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927–2001). It is a nonprofit educational activity of Himalayan Academy, with the following purposes: 1. To foster Hindu solidarity as a unity in diversity among all sects and lineages; 2. To inform and inspire Hindus worldwide and people interested in Hinduism; 3. To dispel myths, illusions and misinformation about Hinduism; 4. To protect, preserve and promote the sacred *Vedas* and the Hindu religion; 5. To nurture and monitor the ongoing spiritual Hindu renaissance; 6. To publish resources for Hindu leaders and educators who promote Sanatana Dharma. Join this *seva* by sending letters, clippings, photographs, reports on events and by encouraging others.



Founder:
Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Publisher:
Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Editor-in-Chief:
Paramacharya Sadasivanatha Palaniswami

Publisher's Aide: Paramacharya Sivanatha Ceyonswami

Deputy Editor: Acharya Kumarnathaswami

Managing Editor: Acharya Arumuganathaswami

Production Manager: Sannyasin Brahmanathaswami

Subscription and Distribution Manager:

Sannyasin Shanmuganathaswami

Assistant Editors: Sannyasin Senthilnathaswami,
Sadhaka Jayanatha

Advertising Manager: Yogi Jothinatha

Correspondents: Rajiv Malik, Prabha Prabhakar

Bhardwaj, Madhu Kishwar, Delhi; Choodamani Shivaram, Bengaluru; Mangala Prasad Mohanty, Odisha;

G. K. Nair, Kerala; Lavina Melwani, New York; Dr. Hari

Bansh Jha, Nepal; Paras Ramoutar, Trinidad. *Copy Editor:*

Chamundi Sabanathan. *HPI Staff:* Chandra San-

kara. *Sanskritist:* Dr. P. Jayaraman. *Consultants:* Dr. S.P.

Sabharatham Sivachariyar, Sheela Venkatakrishnan.

Artist: Rajeev N.T. *Photo Contributors:* Thomas L. Kelly,

Dinodia, Dev Raj Agarwal, Vel Kadressen, Mu Devarayan,

Indivar Sivanathan. *Webmasters:* Tim Mize, Dharmalingam Siddhan, Andre Garzia. *Distribution:* USA:

Ingram Periodicals, New Leaf, EBSCO Subscription Services,

OneSource, Ubiquity. Europe: SWETS Subscription Service.

Malaysia and Singapore: Sanathana Dharma Publications.

India: Central News Agency Limited, Delhi.

Mauritius: CODIP. Trinidad: Pandit Narendra & Ash-

winee Ragoonanan. *Printer:* QuadGraphics, St. Cloud,

Minnesota.

IN MY OPINION

Initiation Through Touch

How a hug from Amma inspired years of research and powerful spiritual transformations

BY DR. ARJUN DASWANI

IN JULY, 1992, I FOUND myself in a church in New York City, getting a hug from Mata Amritanandamayi, more popularly known as Amma, the Hugging Saint. This was my first encounter with this legendary saint, and my life has never been the same.

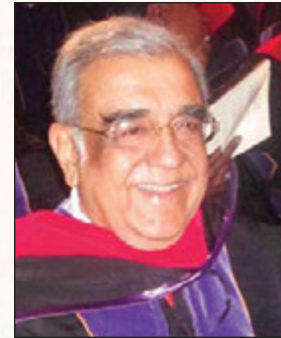
My spiritual journey has revealed to me that when one is ready, the right guru will appear for each specific stage of spiritual growth. I have had the great privilege of being just a few feet away from the Catholic Pope in the Vatican and of sitting in the same room with the Pontiff of the Sringeri Mutt, one of the four pillars built by the great Adi Shankaracharya. An illuminating honor was sitting with the great honorable swamis of HINDUISM TODAY, Al Gore and hundreds of others at the Kremlin in Moscow, while *Aum* was intoned by all.

As a student of many teachers, I realized what I felt after that first hug in 1992 was unique. I had a sense of bewilderment as a great change occurred in my body and mind. I felt urged to find the underlying cause of this happening.

I've found that many masters, both past and present, do not encourage initiation through touch, rather choosing to initiate devotees through sight or voice. I knew that Amma's hug contained all three elements: touch, when she hugged me; sound, when she whispered in my ears, "My darling son;" and sight, as she looked into my eyes. Amma is unique and rather unorthodox in her initiations—or so it would seem by today's usual standards.

What is actually taking place when such an initiation occurs? What is kundalini, and how does all this ascending energy gradually lead us to Self Realization?

At every level, touch sparks growth. It is the seed of development and is our first and primary language. Our bodies are part of our subconscious minds—picking up and



transmitting lots of information. When plants or animals physically touch or humans hug each other, it changes the flow and intensity of energy and consciousness within and between them.

There is an inborn evolutionary power that awakens during one's spiritual development. In this way, consciousness transcends the ordinary limits.

Kundalini is the developmental

force that unfolds humans to their fullest spiritual maturity. Gopi Krishna described kundalini as a strong current of psychic energy that ascends from the base of the spine to the head. Sri Ramana Maharishi maintained that the kundalini energy is nothing but the natural energy of the Self, where the Self is the universal consciousness or cosmic consciousness present in every being, and that the individual mind of thoughts cloaks this natural energy from unadulterated expression.

The source of enlightenment and Self Realization is within each of us. Gurus and spiritual practices help us to quiet the mind, allowing Self Realization to happen. That process started within me from my very first hug from Amma. The strength and length of the process varies within each person.

The soul, in its joy of incarnating, forgets its true nature when it mistakes itself as being separate from its source. Vedanta provides a powerful road map of the relation of states and levels of consciousness and the level of the soul or spirit. Energetic awakening of consciousness happens through personal practices—through meditation, prayers, service, surrender and the guru's grace. For each, there is a veil over the face of the Infinite, which is eventually removed.

DR. DASWANI, 68, lives in New Jersey and is actively connected with the Sringeri Vidhya Bharati Foundation and the Mata Amritanandamayi Center

BRIEFLY...

RARE ARTIFACTS WERE RECENTLY returned to the National Archives of Nepal by the US Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The historical pieces are six wooden covers from ancient Hindu scriptures, intricately carved and colored with images of the Gods. They are some of the oldest known Nepalese paintings. Stolen decades ago, they are valued at US\$150,000–\$200,000.

THE KARNATAKA SANSKRIT University has adopted a new structure for its Sanskrit textbooks aimed at making the language more accessible by presenting it in smaller segments and short question and answer

form, rather than long passages and lengthy memorizations. The books will be made available to some 45,000 students across Karnataka state, from high school level to post-graduation.

IN MANGALORE, KARNATAKA, the Kudroli Shree Gokarnanatheshwara Temple has appointed two widows, Lakshmi and Indira, as temple priests. It is an important appointment, standing against the cultural stigma towards widows, which considers them inauspicious, often keeping them away from religious events. The women have received four months of scriptural training, will be paid

A 10-Minute Spiritual Workout

An abbreviated daily regimen designed for those who find that today's busy life allows little or no time for introspection

BY SATGURU BODHINATHA VEYLANSWAMI

NOWADAYS THE IDEA OF PERFORMING A daily physical workout is widespread. Nearly everyone appreciates the need to stay fit and healthy for a productive, contented life. Three types of exercise are recommended: endurance, flexibility and strength. Each has specific benefits. Endurance activities, such as walking, running and swimming, increase vitality and keep the heart, lungs and circulatory system healthy. Flexibility activities, such as hatha yoga, T'ai Chi and dancing, keep the muscles relaxed and the joints mobile. Strength activities build muscle tissue and keep the skeletal system strong. These include calisthenics, weight/resistance exercises and climbing stairs.

Taking care of our physical body is essential; but for optimum performance in life, all dimensions of our being need attention: physical, emotional/intellectual and spiritual. Each is important and deserves its share of attention. Of the three, the spiritual, or superconscious, dimension is typically the most neglected, even though it is the core of our being, our real identity. My Gurudeva wrote: "We have to adjust our subconscious to the idea that we are a superconscious being, rather than an instinctive being or an intellectual being driven by the impulses of the five senses. Awareness is the core of us."

We maintain physical health through exercises. We nourish our intellectual/emotional nature through learning new things all through life, expanding and strengthening our mental abilities. The emotional nature is sustained by tending closely to interpersonal relations, practicing surrender and acceptance, by striving to build good character qualities, serving others and living a balanced life.

We give time to our spiritual nature by performing daily religious activities. I like to call this a spiritual workout. During this time, we are reminded that life's inner purpose is to make spiritual progress, moving forward toward the ultimate goal of experiencing God, Self Realization, and subsequently moksha, liberation from the cycle of rebirth. It is not so much a matter of exercising our spiritual nature as it is taking time to experience it. The scripture *Tirumantiram* shares: "Step by step, practice withdrawal of the mind and look inward. One by one, you will witness the myriad good things within. Now and here below, you may meet the Lord for whom the ancient *Veda* still searches everywhere."

Generally we are so wrapped up in our outer nature that we are hardly aware of our true, glorious inner reality. This can go on life after life, as it does for many people, who only begin to think of greater realities when nearing the point of death.

The benefits of such times of quiet retreat from life's hustle and bustle are underrated and overlooked, as life in the 21st century



becomes more and more hectic and externally demanding. Many orthodox families living in India still manage to reserve time for their spiritual being by performing an early morning puja in their home shrine, followed by repetition of a mantra while counting on japa beads.

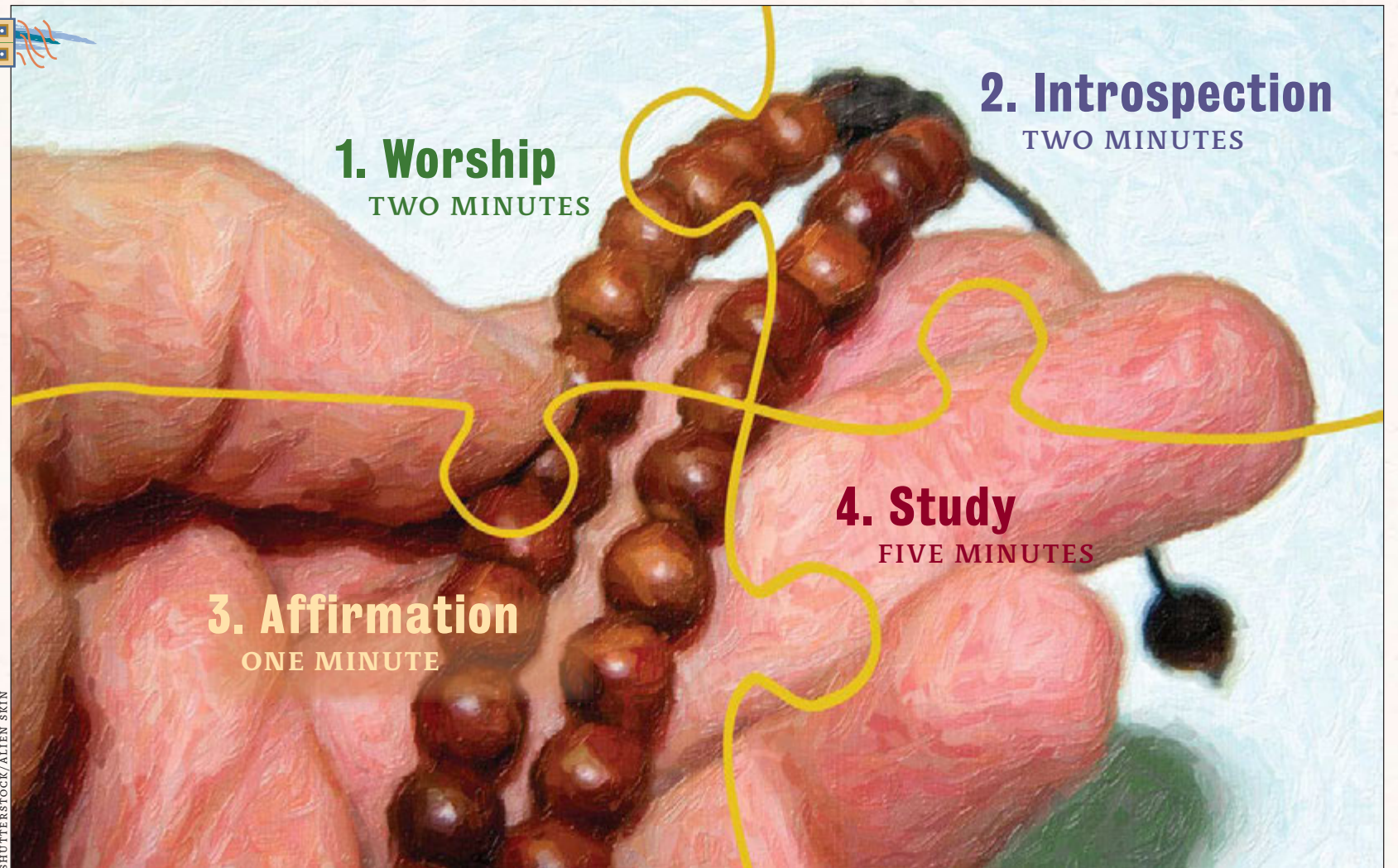
The predominant trend in India and other countries, however, is that fewer and fewer families follow such disciplines. Sitting with me, so many say the same thing: "We just can't seem to find the time for puja, japa or meditation." Time devoted to employment, transportation, eating, entertainment, physical exercise and spending time with family and friends takes up the whole day. The traditional one-hour daily religious workout

is proving to be too long and, because the benefits are not well understood, it is commonly skipped altogether. My Gurudeva spoke of those benefits, "As a result [of your daily religious practices], you will be able to brave the forces of the external world without being disturbed by them and fulfill your dharma in whatever walk of life you have chosen. Because your daily sādhanā has regulated your nerve system, the quality of your work in the world will improve, and your mood in performing it will be confident and serene."

So, what's the solution? I focus primarily on the youth, for their patterns are not too rigid to change. I devised a ten-minute program consisting of four activities that can be performed whenever time is available. Hopefully, the brevity and flexibility of the time of day, along with a clear sense of the spiritual benefits, will motivate students to adopt this workout or, equally as good, customize a routine of their own. I suggest this practice be taken up around age fifteen and maintained throughout high school and university. After schooling, it is hoped that those serious about their spiritual life will increase their workout to half an hour.

The spiritual workout consists of four activities: worship, introspection, affirmation and study. The worship portion involves repeating a mantra to a chosen Deity or reciting nine or more names of the Deity, offering grains of rice to a murti or picture with each repetition or name. For example, if worshipping Lord Ganesha, one might intone the mantra Aum Sri Ganeshaya Namah or another of your choice or lineage. Alternatively, a short bhajan can be sung while looking at the Deity's picture or murti. Devote two minutes to this simple expression of reverence and gratitude.

The introspection portion consists of chanting the mantra Aum nine times with eyes closed. For Aum japa to be effective, the mantra must be pronounced correctly. The first syllable is A, pronounced as



3. Affirmation
ONE MINUTE

1. Worship
TWO MINUTES

2. Introspection
TWO MINUTES

4. Study
FIVE MINUTES

the English word "awe," but prolonged: "aaa." The second syllable is U, as in "roof," pronounced "oo," but prolonged: "ooo." The third syllable is M, pronounced "mm" with the front teeth gently touching and the sound prolonged: "mmmm." Each repetition is sounded for about seven seconds, with two seconds on A, two seconds on U and three seconds on M, with a silence of about two seconds before the next repetition. The three syllables are run together: AAUUMM (silence), AAUUMM (silence), AAUUMM (silence). On the first syllable, A, we feel the solar plexus and chest vibrating. On the second syllable, U, the throat vibrates. The third syllable, M, vibrates the top of the head. Devote two minutes to this.

Affirmations are statements repeated to oneself to place specific impressions in our subconscious mind to produce positive results in the future. This portion of the workout consists of repeating nine times the affirmation "I'm alright right now." Two other affirmations that can be used are "All my needs will always be met" and "I can, I will, I am able to accomplish what I plan." The three-fold key to effectively utilizing affirmations is: 1) keep the mind focused on the meaning of what you are saying, 2) hold in your mind a visualization that shows the result you want to achieve and 3) feel in the present how you will feel later, when you have achieved what the affirmation describes. Devote one minute to this.

The study portion consists of reading a sacred Hindu text that provides you new knowledge and insight. It is important to choose a work that you find clear and inspiring, avoiding those that seem obscure or technical. Devote five minutes to this.

What are the benefits of these four religious practices? The benefit of the worship portion is that it increases our devotion to the Deity,

enhancing our relationship with Him or Her. It is a natural first step toward eventually performing a full rite of worship (atmartha puja). The introspective practice of chanting Aum produces a calming effect on the mind and raises our energies into the more spiritual part of the mind, moving you into the higher chakras. It provides a natural first step toward the deeper practices of meditation, such as regulating our breath (pranayama) and withdrawing energy from the senses (pratyahara), focusing the thought process (dharana) leading to experiencing our inner soul nature (dhyana and samadhi). Repeating an affirmation each day helps us become more positive and self-confident, making us more successful in everything we do. Affirmations are also a great antidote to worry. The study of sacred texts increases knowledge of our faith and catalyzes insights into Hindu philosophy and practices.

It is important to keep in mind that the amount of spiritual advancement we make toward our ultimate goal of experiencing God, Self-Realization, and the subsequent liberation from the cycle of rebirth, or moksha, is directly related to the amount of time we devote to religious practices.

Sage Patanjali mentions this in his *Yoga Sutra* (1.21; 22): "For those who have strong dedication, samadhi is near. Whether one's practice is mild, medium or intense also makes a difference." The sage is indicating that spiritual progress is not based only on how much time we devote to our practices, but also on how much dedication, energy or effort we put into it. His third verse on this topic (1.23) states: "Samadhi may also come through devotion to Ishvara." This means that effort and dedication can be supplemented by the blessings or grace we receive due to our intense devotion to God.

LETTERS

Srouta Saivas

The latest magazine (Oct/Nov/Dec, 2013) is wonderful. The Srouta Saiva article is excellent. The print and the pictures are very expressive. We thank you at HINDUISM TODAY magazine. As it is correctly mentioned, the days of Srouta Saivism being hidden are gone. Lord Siva chose the right place to reveal Himself. Excellent work. We appreciate all of your effort to portray this ageless sampradaya. Thank you all.

LAKSHMI SINGARAJU
ANDRHA PRADESH, INDIA
LSSINGARAJU@YAHOO.COM

Kudos

A heartfelt thank-you for a wonderful resource—I am an avid reader of your magazine for many years and have learned much from it Thank you.

JEROO CAPTAIN
GRANITE BAY, CALIFORNIA, USA
JEROOCAPTAIN@GMAIL.COM

A Past Letter

I applaud this letter to the editor written by Grimulfr Laugrsson at jarnawulf@cs.com in July 2002, "The Roots of Euro-Americans." I would wish to see it run again.

BRAMH MISHRA
SUGAR LAND, TEXAS, USA
BRAMHB4@GMAIL.COM

✓ *Hinduism Today's editors have agreed to Mr. Mishra's unusual request, and have included the following reprint of Grimulfr Laugrsson's letter, as it relates directly to this issue's feature article about Hinduism in Europe.*

"I hear that many Hindus have wondered why many Americans and Europeans are rejecting Christianity in order to convert to Hinduism. 'Why would someone reject their own culture to embrace someone else's?' There are very specific reasons why this is the case. At one time, the people of the European countries did not practice Christianity. They practiced religions that were very similar to Hinduism. Hinduism and the various forms of Paganism that were practiced in Europe have a common root, hence the terminology 'Indo-European.' If you were to compare the *Elder Edda* (the sacred text of the ancient Northern Europeans) to the *Rig Veda*, you would find striking similarities.

"Christianity, on the other hand, is not really a Western religion. It was directly spawned from Judaism. Later on, it was embraced by power hungry Caesars and popes of Rome who in turn used this religion as a means of spiritual, mental and physical domination.

All who did not agree with their viewpoints were murdered, burned, raped and destroyed. Missionaries were sent to other countries outside of Rome as a means to spy on other religions as well as seduce leaders into giving up their native religions (usually with bribes of gold and land) and to join the Romans in their unholy mission of destroying other cultures—which they perceived as 'helping.'

"I would like to address a few points made by Sri Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal in his interview for your March/April, 2001, article 'On Dharma, the Pope, Kids, and More...' He said, 'When foreigners approach my guru's guru seeking conversion to Hinduism, he advises them to "become better Christians." That is the essence of Hinduism. If you cannot find solace in your religion, you will never be able to find it in any other religion.'

"I agree with his statement to a certain extent. True, folks should seek out their own roots first and foremost. However, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati may not realize that there is no solace or substance in Christianity for such seekers, as it does not truly resonate in the soul of the American or European, because it has roots outside of our blood and soul. If Euro-Americans or Europeans are ever to find solace and substance in anything, it will be found in the pre-Christian European religions. The reason for foreigners being attracted to Hinduism is based on the fact that it is more in line with their blood/soul than Christianity is (which has Semitic/Middle-Eastern roots).

"If you wish to direct non-Indians away from Hinduism towards something that is of their own blood and soul, then direct them towards the elder ways of Europe, which capture the same spirit of polytheism, animism, mysticism and philosophical thought that is found in Hinduism."

GRIMULFR LAUGRSSON
JARNAWULF@CS.COM

How Can Hindus Unite?

I read with interest Srinivas Sudhindra's opinion, "How Can Hindus Unite?" I am shocked to read his criticisms of "Shankaran Advaita" and Swami Vivekananda. Advaita (non-dualism) is what unites all the diverse streams of Hinduism and is rooted in *Rig Veda*, which thunders, *Ekam sat; viprah bahuda vadanti*—"Truth is One; the sages have described It variously." The *Upanishads* are replete with references where the concept of advaita has been reinforced. The author seems to have a preference for the philosophy of dualism in which man is devoted to God. Actually, the three interpretations of Vedanta, namely, dualism, qualified non-dualism and

non-dualism are not in contradiction with each other. Instead, they complement each other.

PRADEEP SRIVASTAVA
DETROIT, MICHIGAN, USA
PRADEEPSCOOL@HOTMAIL.COM

I enjoyed reading Mr. Sudhindra's thoughts about "How Can Hindus Unite?" (Oct/Nov/Dec, 2013). However, it also left some unanswered questions. He stated: "Swami Vivekananda was selling advaita not as advaita but as Hinduism. He mostly ignores the other diverse Hindu streams, such as the Vaishnavite, Saivite and Shakta sampradayas." This to me is a wrong interpretation of Swamiji's preaching. First, he was not "selling" anything. Yes, he was preaching Sanatana Dharma. Second, he did not ignore any of diverse Hindu streams, including Vaishnavite, Saivite or Shakta—as you would know, he was a chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who himself practiced all of these disciplines.

SACHIN DAVE
NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA
RSACHINDAVE@GMAIL.COM

Teaching Our Youth

I am one of the many Indian Hindus settled in the USA holding to my religion as much as possible while living an American life. My greatest concern has been passing Hinduism onto my children. I began researching online and was impressed the amount of information available. When young, my children would listen enthusiastically to the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and others, but after a few years of school they begin to question nearly every aspect of their culture and religion.

I am a born Hindu and will practice what I know and believe all my life. I feel sorry for children growing up outside strong Hindu communities. The recent article by Aneesh Bairavasundaram ("In My Opinion," Oct/Nov/Dec, 2013) is eye catching, and accurately describes the situation my children and many others all share. Until now, I felt that my children's difficulties were because of our remote location. But after reading this article, I understand that all Hindu children, even the sons of priests, are equally affected.

Children require different approaches to teaching, throughout different stages of their lives. We need to educate our children about our great religion by continuously explaining the depths behind its many parts. We need to show them the connections between scriptures and real life. We need to bridge their temple life with their lives as Americans. All the important aspects of our faith must be elaborated upon, including meditation, reincarnation, karma, ahimsa, annaprasana, samskaras, Surya namaskara, pranayama and

festivals. They must learn of the Gods, and of the great yugas of time. They must hear the *Vedas* and know of our ancient heritage. They can be taught the balance of ayurveda and modern day medicine, and learn of the subtle beauties in Sanskrit.

Many Americans are not fully aware of the differences between many Eastern peoples. Even after repeated correction, people still think I am a Muslim. Any child born here is as much an American as any other. But they're often made to feel different if they're not Christian. We need to equip our children with ways to defend our religion through education, for their own understanding and for that of their peers. This was excellently portrayed by Mr. Bairavasundaram's article.

RAJU CHORAGUDI
IRON MOUNTAIN, MICHIGAN, USA
CHORAGUDI@HOTMAIL.COM

Chattampi Swami Disciple?

I was reading the article on "Chattampi Swami's Long Shadow" (Oct/Nov/Dec, 2013). The claim of the author, G.K. Nair, that Sree Narayana Guru was a disciple of Chattampi Swami is a false story. They were classmates. Chattampi Swami was two years senior in age and thus, even though very good friends, Sree Narayana Guru considered Chattampi Swami-

kal an elder brother. None of Narayana Guru's biographies (I have eleven of them) ever said that he was Chattampi Swami's disciple.

Some of the elders in my family and village met both of them. They told them that the two were very close, moving around Kerala like brothers Balarama and Sree Krishna.

The statement of the author, "While the Ezhava community has reverently accepted his disciple Narayana Guru as their spiritual preceptor, the Nair community did not follow suit with Chattampi Swami," is not the full fact either. Narayana Guru was accepted as spiritual preceptor by many people. A number of his disciples were from the Nair and brahmin communities. Muslims and Christians also revered him as a spiritual master.

The difference between the two was that while Chattampi Swami remained a jnana yogi, Narayana Guru ventured into bhakti and karma yoga along with jnana yoga. Narayana Guru's spiritual writings are real gems of Indian spirituality which are as good as any *Upanishad*. The author did a disservice to both these rishis as he tried to project them as the representations of two communities, contrary to the fact that they both were rishis of advaita. To me they were complimentary to each other and should be revered by all. They both are my inspiration and my guiding

lights. Please do not separate them based on which community they were born into or one as the teacher of the other.

UDAYABHANU PANICKAR
KERALA, INDIA
UDAYABHANUPANICKAR@YAHOO.COM

✓ *Correspondent G.K. Nair replies, "This question arose during the life of Chattampi Swami itself. In 1916, V. Narayana Menon asked him if Narayana Guru was his disciple. Chattampi Swami replied, "Let people say like that, that is not going to affect us. I don't want to become anybody's guru. I wish to be everyone's disciple. For both of us, these arguments are meaningless. The only thing is I transmitted the knowledge that my guru gave me to Nanu (as he affectionately called Sree Narayana Guru). He has given it to his disciples. It is a rare mantra which is used only by very few. In my knowledge, except in our line, no one has got that."*

Letters with writer's name, address and daytime phone number should be sent to:

Letters, Hinduism Today
107 Kaholalele Road
Kapaa, Hawaii, 96746-9304 USA
or faxed to: (808) 822-4351
or visit: www.hinduismtoday.com/letters

Letters may be edited for space and clarity and may appear in electronic versions of HINDUISM TODAY.

Responding to Hinduism's Greatest Need

How to let Dharma's voice be heard for generations

YES, I'M ENCOURAGED BY THE VITALITY of our faith today," Dr. B. P. Lathi explained, "But when I see the array of powerful forces working hard to undo Hinduism, and the mass of misinformation circulating, I worry. If we want our grandchildren to resist the onslaught, we've got to react! We need intellectual clarity as never before. It is not enough to build temples. We need to understand their function and value, then inspire our children with that knowledge—not just a youth here and there, but a majority of each generation. That is what it will take. It's a big job and, as I see it, time is short."

To do his part, Dr. Lathi, a retired professor of electrical engineering living in California, generously supports HINDUISM TODAY. "We must make sure this pure voice of dharma is heard as widely as possible. I know of no other publication like it. It proudly declares itself to be Hindu and ceaselessly works to rectify misconceptions and abuse

frankly and courageously. And especially, it is doing pioneering work to present our faith in a way that is intellectually satisfying and spiritually inspiring. Here is our chance; let's make the most of it!"

Dr. Lathi established a charitable remainder trust which, when it matures in 13 years, will grant \$300,000 to the Hinduism Today Production Fund, a part of Hindu Heritage Endowment (HHE). Earnings from this gift will enable the editors to produce an ever more potent magazine. Happily, Dr. and Mrs. Lathi also benefit from their gift in a number of ways. Find out more about Dr. Lathi's charitable remainder trust at hheonline.org/lathi.html.

For tips about planned giving, visit www.hheonline.org. Subscribe to our HHE newsletter for more on planned giving and to our Production Fund newsletter, for news of the magazine and its all-important Production Fund: gurudeva.org/email-news. Contact us at hhe@hindu.org or call 1-808-634-5407.



Dr. and Mrs. B. P. Lathi at home in California: "The world needs Hinduism as exemplar. Here is a faith evolved out of meditation, not conflict."

QUOTES & QUIPS

Peace comes when there is nothing left to defend, and nothing to conquer.

Yogasri Svami Yogananda Giri, head of Svami Gitananda Ashram in Italy

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life—think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success; this is the way great spiritual giants are produced. **Pramukh Swami Maharaj**, guru of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha

Dharma can be defined as the opposite of chaos, the order behind everything that exists. **Swami Satyananda Saraswati**, head of Advaitavidya, Barcelona, Spain

Gross utility kills beauty. We now have all over the world huge production of things, huge organizations, huge administrations of empire—all obstructing the path of life. Civilization is waiting for a great

consummation, for an expression of its soul in beauty. This must be your contribution to the world. **Rabindranath Tagore** (1861–1941), mystic poet

Everything I know, I learned at the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh. Everything I do, I do for Lord Siva. **Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda**, head of Yoga Portuguese Confederation, Lisbon

Karma is movement in the mind. When the mind remains motionless, there is no karma. **Satguru Siva Yogaswami** (1872–1964), Sri Lankan mystic

Think like a genius. Work like a giant. Live like a saint. **Swami Omkarananda Saraswati** (1930–2000)

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it. **Henry Ford** (1863–1947), founder of the Ford Motor Company

When I speak about Patanjali, the whole of India's religious tradition also comes up. It is all integrated. **Swami Veetamohananda**, head of the Vedanta Center near Paris

Do not run away. Face the world and get hit by the world. Let the world drop you again and again. It is the means to destroy the Ego. **Swami Chinmayananda** (1916–1993), founder of Chinmaya Mission

Fall down seven times, get up eight. Japanese proverb

Each work has to pass through these stages—ridicule, opposition and then acceptance. Those who think ahead of their time are sure to be misunderstood. **Swami Vivekananda** (1863–1902)

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light. **Plato** (427–347 BCE), Greek philosopher

He who takes medicine and neglects diet wastes the skill of his doctors. Chinese proverb

My wife and I raised our two children in the West as vegetarians. They have remained vegetarians into their adult life, primarily because they never regarded meat as a food. Anonymous

The heaven-sent torrent leaps, rushing down rocky heights. So does the silent divine stream from heart's inner core—formless, pure, clear, crystalline, boundless, free—from my Holy Master, ever pour. **Tirumantirum** 249

Common men talk bagfuls of religion but

do not practice even a grain of it. The wise man speaks a little, even though his whole life is religion expressed in action. **Sri Ramakrishna** (1836–1886), famed guru of Swami Vivekananda

Men who can brave death on the battlefield are common; but rare are they who can face an audience without fear. **Tirukural** 723

I salute the light within your eyes where the whole Universe dwells. For when you are at that center within you, and I am at that place within me, we shall be one. **Crazy Horse** (1840–1877), Oglala Lakota Sioux Native American

We are dreaming that we are not Parasiva—that we are going to realize Parasiva sometime in the future. But realizing Parasiva is like waking up. We just have to claim it. We have to step beyond time and space, step out of the concept that we have to do something in order to realize it. It's



like when we are traveling in a dream, we just have to wake up—very simple—and we find we are home. **Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami**, publisher of HINDUISM TODAY

It is not a matter of becoming the Self, but of realizing that you never were not the Self. **Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami**

DID YOU KNOW?

Gold's Celestial Origins

IN HINDUISM, GOLD IS KNOWN TO contain divine energies which shine brightly in the inner worlds; it is a beacon for devas and Gods. For this reason, gold has long been collected and closed away in temples and other sacred places, creating epicenters of spiritual power.

Why, one wonders, is gold so rare, and where does this sacred element originate? The ancient Incas and Egyptians considered gold to be a solar metal, originating from the stars and the Sun God. As it turns out, they were right.

Trace amounts of gold can be artificially made from mercury or platinum, but this requires a nuclear reactor or a particle accelerator. Long-standing theory had it that gold could only be naturally created in supernovas—large stellar explosions.

Recently, however, researchers of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge have determined that gold finds its origin in the collision of neutron stars. A neutron star is the collapsed core remaining of a star after a supernova.

A neutron star a few miles across may have a mass 500,000 times greater than the Earth. Just a teaspoon of such star matter would weigh ten billion tons. To conceptualize that density, think of taking a commercial jet plane and compressing it to the size of a grain of sand. When two typical neutron stars collide, particles of gold—approximating the mass of ten moons—are propelled into space.

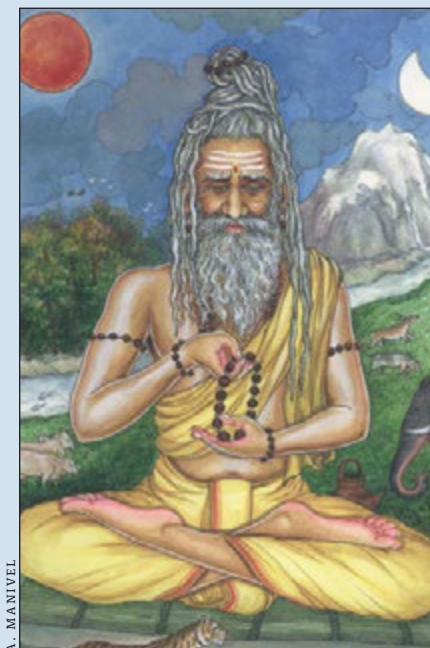
Gold present when the Earth was formed would have sunk to the core. The



question is why we find it in the mantle. A recent theory postulates that a continuous shower of asteroids and meteors early in the Earth's history deposited the gold (and other rare elements) we now find near the surface. More recent asteroids also play a part in the formation of gold fields, notably the 300-kilometer wide Vredefort crater in South Africa, home to some of the world's richest gold deposits which were reformed and preserved by the impact.

BASICS

Renunciation



THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES of sannyasa are to promote the spiritual progress of the individual, bringing him into God Realization, and to protect and perpetuate the religion through his illumined leadership. Renunciation and asceticism have been an integral component of Vedic culture from the earliest days, the most highly esteemed path of the Hindu Dharma. Monastic life has both an individual and a universal objective. At the individual level, it is a life of selflessness in which the monastic has made the supreme sacrifice of renouncing all personal ambition, all involvement in worldly matters, that he might direct his consciousness and energies fully toward God. Guided by the satguru along the path of spiritual discipline, the initiated sannyasin unfolds through the years into deeper and deeper realizations. Ultimately, if he persists, he comes into direct knowing of Transcendent

Reality. At the universal level, Hindu monasticism fosters the religion by preserving the truths of the Sanatana Dharma. Competent swamis are the teachers, the theologians, the exemplars of their faith, the torchbearers lighting the way for all.

Eventually, in one life or another, all will turn to the renunciate path. However, it would be equally improper for a renunciate-minded soul to enter family life as for a householder to seek to be a sannyasin. A word of warning. Be cautious of those who promise great kundalini awakenings and spiritual rewards from severe practices without preparation, initiation and renunciation. Those entering the serious life of sannyasa must be prepared to follow the traditional path of unrewarded sadhana through the years, apart from dear family and friends. Such is the way to reach the truth of yoga. It takes many, many years for the soul to thus ripen and mature.

How Enlightened Men Live

The Guru Chronicles

THE MAKING OF THE FIRST AMERICAN SATGURU

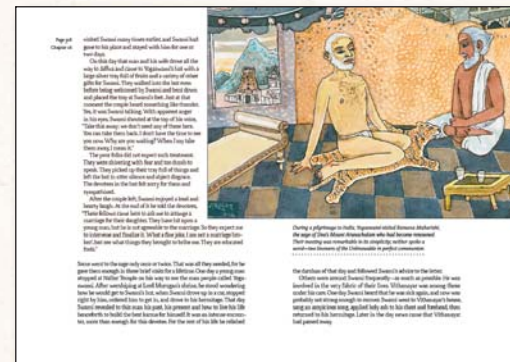
By the Swamis of Kauai's Hindu Monastery



The illustrated stories of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, his guru Siva Yogaswami and five preceding masters, who all held truth in the palm of their hand and inspired slumbering souls to "Know thy Self"



Here is an adventure into the rarely divulged world of spiritual masters, full of extraordinary stories, insights and spiritual encounters. At its heart is the untold life of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, who founded HINDUISM TODAY, his guru Siva Yogaswami and five preceding masters of the spiritual lineage. Illustrated by the South Indian genius, S. Rajam.



"Just now I completed the reading of the most powerful *Guru Chronicles*. What a rewarding experience! The design, contents and presentation of the most powerful book to awaken, most wonderful to inspire and the most informative to instill constant devotion to the eternal Guru Parampara are indeed superb and praiseworthy." **DR. S.P. SABHARATHNAM, CHENNAI**

"Deeply captivating. The book has a musical magic, a beautifully lyrical story that happens at once in the past and the present, with the promise of an ever-deepening future of awakening for the reader. It brings so vibrantly to life the simple life and deep spiritual culture of India and Sri Lanka. S. Rajam's art adds to the musical quality, as his work is rhythmic and lyrical, too." **GAYATRI RAJAN, CALIFORNIA**

Hardcover, 832-pages, fully illustrated, \$59.95

ISBN 978-1-934145-39-5; Ebook 978-1-934145-40-1

Order: www.minimela.com; minimela@hindu.org; phone: 877-255-1510; Amazon.com

FROM THE AGAMAS

Interpreting Dreams

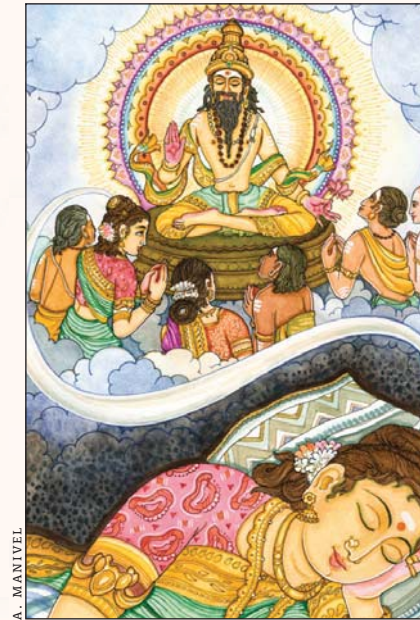
What to make of auspicious and inauspicious omens?

The following is a lucid translation of passages from the Uttara Kamika Agama, chapter 22, verses 1-6, 22-13, 60-65, and 105-110 in which Lord Siva discusses the meanings of dreams. The last five paragraphs include the commentary of Bhatta Narayana, as the original text is very abstruse

NOW I WILL REVEAL TO YOU THE effects of various dreams. Normally a disciple could have supremely auspicious visions in dreams during the night prior to the performance of an initiation or any other special ritual. If such dream occurs in the first quarter of the night, the disciple would reap its benefit within one year. If it occurs in the second quarter of the night, the effect of the dream would materialize within six months. If it occurs in the third quarter of the night, the effect of the dream would be seen within one month. If the dream occurs in the fourth quarter of the night, its effect would manifest immediately. There is no doubt about such occurrence of the effects of dreams.

The radiant and resplendent Sun; the Moon enclosed by stars; fire blazing forth, nourished by daily oblations; shining lamps with exceeding brilliance; mother, father, wife, sons or daughters; good-hearted persons—if these are seen by the disciple in his dream, then he will attain inexhaustible wealth. It is specifically good to see in a dream the capturing of cows, lions and elephants of the enemy in a battlefield. Studying the *Vedas* and the *Agamas*; being smeared with food; the sprouting of grass or a tree from one's navel; holding flower; water and the tips of kusha-grass; being smeared with the unguent of white sandal; being attired in white cloth; seeing a brahmin and hearing his words of blessings; seeing white fruits, a hand-held fan, flag, or an umbrella made of lotus flowers and leaves; seeing a mirror studded with diamonds; witnessing light, cowrie, weapons, lotus-shaped insignia, pure water, brilliant gold; conversing with the nation's leader—these experiences are conducive to the attainment of auspicious benefits.

Seeing the following in a dream would result in inauspicious effects: seeing trees with red flowers; an outcaste; a fowler; the eating of well-cooked meat and sesame and the drinking of blood; dancing; marriage; singing; playing music with non-string instruments; plunging into a stream; taking a bath with cow dung and cow urine or with a muddy substance; lying on the stomach of one's mother; climbing over a funeral pyre; lightning and thunder; the setting sun, moon and stars; occurrence of portentous phenomenon in distant space; middle space and earth; wrath of the devas, brahmins, king and the guru; embracing young ladies; one's own body being tortured; being purgative; vomiting; proceeding towards the southern direction; being highly affected by disease; the house falling down;



An auspicious night: A devotee dreams of visiting a sage during sleep

cleaning the house; being seized and tormented by ghosts, demons and other cruel spirits; being seized by monkeys or men; being disrespected by others; outburst of mental worry due to that disrespect; being dressed in ochre cloth; being smeared with oil; drinking; plunging.

If a person sees in his dream a Deity, a brahmin, ancestor, yogi or king who is revealing messages to him, whatever has been told by them would actually materialize.

Usually, the dreams manifest indicating the auspicious benefits or inauspicious effects according to the mature state of one's own karmic fruits. These dreams are viewed as the indicating factors of auspicious or inauspicious nature of the near future. Such dreams occur of their own accord; they do not manifest "from" the stored karmas of a person.

Dreams occur in two ways—as related to the future events and as related to the concentrated thought of person. If a person continuously thinks of an object already experienced or to be experienced by him and goes to sleep with same concentration, that object would manifest in his dream. For such dreams which occur as related to the concentrated thought, there is no need for the performance of any rite.

There are some unusual or abnormal appearances or events—such as a lion appearing with two heads, winged horses, mountains dashing against each other, riding on two-headed or winged animals—which would occur in dreams. It is such dreams that synchronize with one's own future events and indicate the inauspiciousness or auspiciousness of the future events of his life. Such unusual events may actually modify or affect the future events of a person.

In this *Agama*, various dreams have been spoken of only to enable the disciple (sadhaka) to construe in a general way the good or bad nature of the events which are to occur in near future. They have not been spoken of with the intention of alarming him.

The auspicious or inauspicious dreams seen by the disciple are equally based on the important future events of his life. Various dreams mentioned here are true as far as the effects are concerned, because they are related to the happenings of the future. Dreams which indicate inauspiciousness should be appeased. Such appeasement would minimize the severity of future events. But the dreams remain without being falsified; the nature of being the real indicators of the future is not altered. It could be seen by the actual occurrences of the future events, if appeasing rites are not performed.

DR. S. P. SABHARATHNAM SIVACHARYAR, of the Adi Saiva priest lineage, is an expert in ancient Tamil and Sanskrit, specializing in the *Vedas*, *Agamas* and *Shilpa Shastras*. This excerpt is from his recent translation of the *Uttara Kamika Agama*.

The Hindu Diaspora within Continental Europe



SPECIAL FEATURE Hinduism Finds a New Home in the Old World

TWO OF OUR EDITORS FROM HAWAII AND OUR UK CORRESPONDENT visited Portugal, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and the Czech Republic last summer. Interviewing and photographing Hindus who hail from all around the globe, we sought to fill a long-standing gap in HINDUISM TODAY's coverage of the diaspora: Continental Europe. Un-

like in the United Kingdom, Sanatana Dharma's presence in mainland Europe is still incipient and as varied as the immigrants' origins. Here, like everywhere Hindus settle, we are preserving our rituals, culture and traditions, building temples, seeking legal recognition of our religion and confronting the perennial challenge of passing our faith on to the next generation.

A Religion Without Borders

Hinduism adds another color to Continental Europe's religious rainbow

WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE HINDU diaspora, one typically thinks of people from the Indian subcontinent. But this is a simplistic concept that belies the worldwide distribution of our faith today. In traveling through nine European nations, we found that more Hindus had come from outside India than from within. The Hindu diaspora here seems as varied as the Continent's own peoples: those we spoke to hail from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Suriname. Adding the tens of thousands of individuals of local European ancestry who find their spiritual home in Sanatana Dharma, a more accurate picture of Hinduism in Europe begins to form.

To compose a comprehensive story of Hinduism in Europe would be impossible after only two weeks in the region, but through the lens of the 38 groups and individuals we encountered, we can assemble an overview of the growing presence of Hinduism in these historic lands and give a sense of the communities, ashrams and satsangs that are setting down roots. As you will see, they come from diverse nations and for different reasons, but they are all bringing the sounds, tastes and colors of Sanatana Dharma to Eu-

rope. It's a story that has never been told.

Portugal

Portugal's Gujarati community came from Mozambique, where they had lived since the late 1800s. "We've been in Mozambique for



more than four generations. My father was born there, I was born there, and my daughter was born there," offered Kirit Kumar Bachu of the Templo Hindu Radha Krishna in

Lisbon. But when civil conflict disrupted their country following its independence from Portugal in 1975, they fled. "We chose Portugal because our language was Portuguese. Few of us knew English."

Portugal's Hindu community once numbered 10,000–12,000, mostly in Lisbon and the nearby dormitory city of Santo António dos Cavaleiros, with another few hundred in Porto, farther north. Due to the country's recent economic woes, almost half of them have now migrated to the UK, Brazil, even back to Mozambique, Angola and elsewhere, in search of better opportunities.

Spain

Krishna Kripa Dasa was born Juan Carlos Ramchandani to a Hindu father and Catholic mother. As a young man, he received ordination as a purohit and now performs samskaras for his fellow Sindhis and other Hindu Spaniards. He estimates that some 25,000 of Spain's 40,000 Hindus have come from India, 5,000 are natives of Eastern Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Poland) and Latin America (Ecuador, Argentina), and 10,000 are Spanish.

Starting in the early 20th century, Sindhis came to the British colony of Gibraltar looking for greater financial opportunity. "From there they went to Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish territories in North Africa, eventually branching out to other cities and islands," added Krishna. Today this group is concentrated mostly in the Canary Islands, with some around Madrid.

The turn of the millennium brought another wave from India, this time mostly Punjabis, who have settled around Barcelona. The country is also home to small communities

of Hindus from Nepal (around 20c) and Bangladesh (around 500).

Italy

Svamini Hamsananda Giri, Vice President of the Italian Hindu Union, told us there are roughly 109,000 Hindus in Italy, spread all over the peninsula. Our whirlwind tour afforded us the opportunity to visit just a handful of communities in the industry-dominated northern regions and one on the southern island of Sicily.

Kumar Pradeep, president of the Sanatan Dharm Mandir in Arzignano, shared that his area is home to 10,000 Punjabis—Sikhs as well as Hindus—and 300–400 Bangladeshi Hindus. "Between 1990 and 2000, there was a lot of work here, in marble, wood, plastic, and leather for shoes," he explained.

A representative of the Shri Hari Om Mandir in Pegognaga added that among the 4,000–5,000 Hindus in his area, 90 percent of whom are from Punjab, 70 percent or more are industrial workers, many at the Landini tractor factory across the Po River. In the bucolic village of Castelverde, a representative of the Shree Durgiana Mandir told us fully one-sixth of the village's 6,000 people are Indians.

Those who came to Italy did so only after failing to attain permanent status in other countries, such as France, Germany and Spain. Though language was a hurdle, "Italy was finally the country that granted them legal documentation to stay," Hamsananda noted. Early on, those who stayed for ten years were able to become citizens, but that door is now closed. "All of the services provided by the government—health, school,

welfare—are fully available, but nowadays it is difficult to maintain a visa, even if one has work and family here," added Hamsananda. Even so, many plan to stay, because they own their homes, hold permanent jobs and their children were born and raised here.

Dhuneschwursing Audit came from Mauritius to Sicily in the early 1990s with 2,500



others, now constituting about a quarter of the Hindus on the island. "We intended to come here to work for 2–5 years at the most. But time has passed so quickly," he lamented.

Unlike the small numbers of professionals who come from India to Italy to work for two to five years and then return, these communities of immigrant industrial and domestic workers are struggling to stay afloat. As in all the Southern European countries, the economic depression is hitting the community

hard, sparking an exodus. Many have left in recent years, and more are on their way, heading to countries such as the UK, Germany, Australia and New Zealand—sometimes back whence they came—in search of newer, better opportunities.

Switzerland

This country's 40,000 Tamil Hindu refugees fled Sri Lanka's 26-year civil war that began in 1983. According to V. Ramalingam, manager of the Sri Manonmani Ampal Alayam in Trimbach, Switzerland's foreign ministry opened its doors to Sri Lankan refugees after its secretary visited the war zone early on and experienced the atrocities first hand.

Due to the language barrier, most of these refugees work in hotels and restaurants or clean factories and houses. They make reasonable, consistent wages, and many homes have two earners, so Switzerland's high cost of living doesn't appear to be a problem, explained Dr. Satish Joshi of the Zurich Forum of Religions. "But," he continued, "even after ten or fifteen years they cannot converse freely in Swiss German or make many friends here. So that makes them hold together as a community."

Another 10,000 Indian Hindus who call Switzerland home include many Bengalis and recently Malayalis, added Dr. Joshi. "In the last 20 years, many of the Hindu immigrants are IT experts, and many of those are Marathis. They came from India, the UK or the USA intending to stay just six months to a year. But I have observed that many of them remain, preferring the quality of life here to that in England or America."

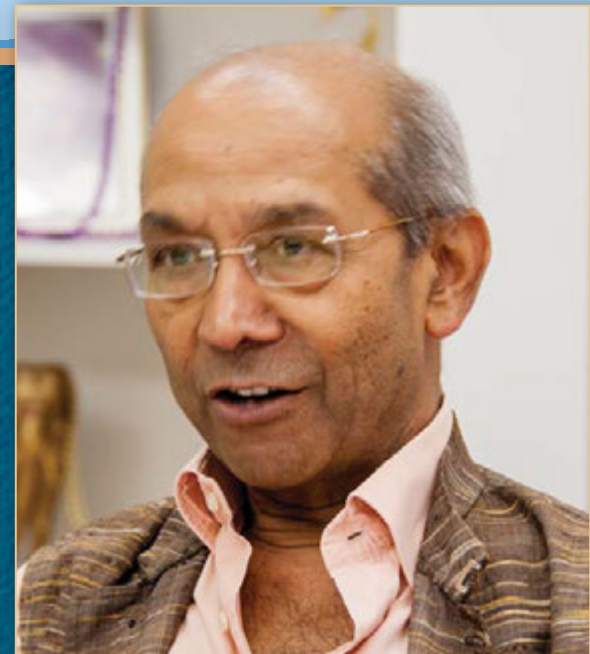
Southern Europe



(clockwise from above) Kirit Kumar Bachu, president of the Templo Hindu Radha Krishna in Lisbon, Portugal; Kumar Pradeep, president of the Sanatan Dharm Mandir in Arzignano, Vicenza, Italy; Dr. Satish Joshi of the Zurich Forum of Religions, spoke with us at the Omkarananda Ashram in Winterthur, Switzerland; members of the Catania Geetanjali Circle, immigrants from the small Indian Ocean nation of Mauritius, at their Doorga Maa Mandir on the ground floor of a historical building in Catania, Sicily, Italy; representatives of five Hindu communities and organizations are gathered by Swami Satyananda Saraswati (second from left) in a student's flat in Barcelona, Spain



ALL PHOTOS: HINDUISM TODAY



Germany

Owing to its size, stability and productive economy, Germany has attracted one of the largest Hindu populations of all of Europe. Writing for Harvard's Pluralism Project, Dr. Martin Baumann of the University of Lucerne explained, "We reckon the figure [of Hindus in Germany] to be about 100,000 people, nine-tenths constituted by immigrants who came as workers and refugees." Mr. Krishnamurthy, who came from Bangalore to Berlin as a welding technician in 1975, reflected on the group that started the city's Sri Ganesha Tempel: "We all came as technical assistants. We trained and studied in India, and they told us Germany was looking for skilled workers. They offered for us to come for two years to work and then go back. Almost 40 years later, we are still here." Their story echoes that of many Indian immigrants.

As in Switzerland, Germany's Indian Hindus are nearly all professionals, and the Sri Lankan refugees, of whom Baumann estimates 45,000 are Hindu, make their way in manual labor—restaurants, factories, houses. At the Sri Sithiv-inayakar Tempel in Hamm, we met young people of the second generation who are bankers, nurses, teachers, doctors and engineers.

The Sri Lankan Hindus here are mostly spread throughout the state of North Rhine-Westphalia from Hamm to Cologne, with smaller groups in Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Nuremberg. Because the Sri Lankan civil war lasted so long, and conditions there are still unfavorable for Tamils, an estimated three-quarters of this refugee group now

hold German passports.

Another significant group came from Afghanistan. Their lives in danger because of their religion, they escaped their home reluctantly during the country's civil war. Germany was one of many countries to extend a helping hand, granting them refugee status. Children came first; parents followed. Representatives of the community's Hari Om Mandir in Cologne estimated their national numbers at 15,000, concentrated in that area as well as Hamburg and Frankfurt.

According to Luh Gede Juli Wirahmini Bisterfeld of Nyama Braya Bali in Hamburg, the Indonesian Consulate lists 700 Balinese families living in Germany. Unlike the refugees from Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, these freely travel back and forth between Germany and Bali. In explanation, Bisterfeld revealed the sense of obligation they have to their original home: "Besides believing in God, we also believe in our ancestors. We want to go back and take care of our family temples. I think that's why we seek always to go home." While a handful are professionals, most Balinese immigrants work in the food service and tourist industries.

Other Hindus have come here from Nepal, the former Hindu kingdom. Ram Pratap Thapa, Consul General of Nepal in Cologne, remarked, "The Nepalese diaspora started in large numbers around 25 years ago. When I came here 30 years ago, there were hardly 50 or 100 people from my country. The statistics are fluctuating, but we see

8,000–10,000 in Germany now." Many came seeking political asylum, fleeing persecution from the Maoists, and now live in Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Goettingen and Cologne.

The Netherlands

One of the largest Hindu populations we encountered on the Continent is in the Netherlands. Bikram Lalbahadoersing, head of Hindu chaplains for the Ministry of Security and Justice, explained, "About 200,000 Hindus are living here in Holland. The biggest group came during the independence period of Suriname [in 1974–75]." About half of Suriname's population, including some 100,000 Hindus, fled to Holland because of the expected political disturbance.

These Hindus' ancestors had reached Suriname in the 1800s, when Holland had started importing laborers to that colony after slavery was abolished in 1863. "The Dutch government got permission from the British government to get people mostly from the northern parts of India: Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The language we speak, Bhojpuri, is from Bihar," added Lalbahadoersing. A century later, when it was time to move again, most came to the Netherlands because they were already Dutch citizens.

Welcomed with open arms, Suriname's Hindus spent the following four decades

reconstructing many of their cultural structures in their new land—everything from mandirs to media to primary schools. They have thrived here, doubling their initial numbers. Lalbahadoersing amplified, "Hindus are very highly educated here in this country. About 30–40 percent go to the universities, especially the ladies." In the 1980s, the low-lying nation saw a few thousand migrate directly from India as well, mostly professionals.

Austria

Mukundrabhai Joshi, founder of the Hindu Mandir Organization in Vienna, put the unofficial number of Hindus in his country at 11,000–12,000, while lamenting that the official number according to the 2001 census is around 4,000. He explained at least part of the disparity: "Hinduism is not a fully recognized religion here. When a Hindu child is born, the officer will not write 'Hindu' as the child's religion on the birth certificate."

Joshi said that while some of the Hindus work in the city's prominent United Nations office, others are businessmen, university students, clothing and newspaper vendors. Dr. Bimal Kundu, a pharmacist who founded a small temple in the Afro-Asian Institute in Vienna, opined that many of Vienna's Hindu trade workers and businessman are Punjabi, and that substantial Nepalese and Bangladeshi communities have recently arrived.

Czech Republic

The Czech Hindu Religious Society has a membership of 10,000, according to its rep-

resentative, Vivek Ojha. Of these, not all are active. "When we organize functions in Prague, we have 300–350 people," he added. "Most of our followers are educated; they are intellectuals, doctors, engineers. Also, the lower middle class, the service class—they know about Hindu culture and religion, yoga and vegetarianism. Those who feel it is for them have joined the Society as well."

Where have these Czech Hindus come from? Surprisingly, over 99 percent of the Society's members are local Czech people who declare themselves to be Hindu. Less than one percent are immigrants, coming from India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

France

The largest Hindu population we found is in France. "There is a big Hindu community in and around Paris. Most of them have come from Pondicherry, which was a French colony," offered Swami Veetamohananda of the Centre Védantique in Gretz-Armainvilliers. France also has communities hailing from Mauritius, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana and Reunion, whose backgrounds and stories closely parallel those of the Surinamese immigrants to the Netherlands.

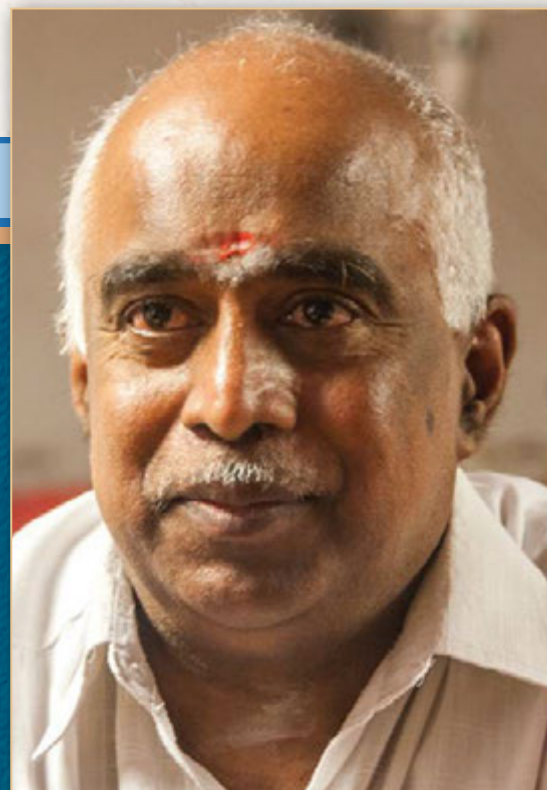
The number of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in France is uncertain, but Mr. Jeyaratnam, manager of Paris's prominent Ganesh Temple—himself an immigrant from Sri Lanka—estimated there are 300,000–400,000, with more than 200,000 in the greater Paris area alone. Most came as refugees, many at the start of Sri Lanka's civil war in the early 1980s

and others trickling in later. Jeyaratnam explained, "Many were in other places all over Europe, and when they learned it would be easy for them in Paris, they came right in and spread throughout the area." In France they could receive social security, health care and other government services.

Rajat Rai, a representative of the Bangladesh Pooja Udjapan Parishad, came to France in 1991 to escape minority persecution in Bangladesh. He told us 1,500 families in his community live in Paris. "But language is a difficulty here. Bangladesh was a British colony, and our second language is English. At first I couldn't even say that I needed a glass of water. We all struggled with this." He even left France for a time due to this frustration. "Now I speak a little French, so everything is easy, but if you can't speak French, it's very difficult."

Like the Mauritian Italians, Sri Lankan Swiss, Afghan and Nepali Germans and others who had fled economic or political hardship, these immigrants had no choice but to adopt menial occupations. Their professional degrees—in medicine, architecture, science, engineering, etc.—from their home country were not recognized in their new land. Combined with the language barrier, this significantly limits their vocational opportunities. However, the outlook is far better for the second generation. Born in Europe, fluent in their new country's language and locally educated, with the advantage of a religious tradition that emphasizes study, personal effort and self-improvement, they are thriving.

Northern & Eastern Europe



(left) Members of Cologne's Balinese community listen in during our interview. (above) Mr. Krishnamurthy, founder of the Sri Ganesha Tempel in Berlin.



ALL PHOTOS: NIRAJ THAKER

(right) Satyapuri Vit Levy and Sanjivni Iva Levy of the Czech Friends of India Association and Vivek Ojha and Anandapuri Andras Sukub of the Czech Hindu Religious Society. (below) Bikram Lalbahadoersing, head of Hindu chaplains for the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice.



Temples Everywhere We Go

In every country, mandirs serve as critical centers for religious and cultural expression

RELIGION'S PLACES OF WORSHIP RE-veal its stage of development in a region. Today, Hindu temples in Continental Europe are like those in North America 30 years ago, when North America had only a few dozen temples—the majority located in warehouses, rented rooms, former churches and homes. Most European temples today, we learned in our travels, are still situated in flats, cellars and industrial halls. But a growing number of towering, traditional edifices herald the establishment of Sanatana Dharma as a major force on the Continent.

Lisbon, Portugal, is home to three of Europe's purpose-built temples. A 7,000-square-meter parcel of land on Alameda Mahatma Gandhi was gifted to the city's Gujarati community by the government in the mid 1980s, according to Kirit Kumar Bachu. Here they built the Templo Hindu Radha Krishna, a massive structure inaugurated in 1998, containing an elaborate, marble-clad worship hall, an auditorium that can hold 600 and a community hall for festivals, weddings and other events.

The new Templo de Shiva is coming up in Lisbon's suburb of Santo António dos Cavaleiros. A large cultural hall, built first, was re-

cently finished and already serves as a gathering place for the local community. Plans are set for a traditional North Indian style mandir on the 16,000-square-meter hilltop property—another gift from the government.

Elsewhere in Lisbon, ground was broken in 2011 for a BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir which is now in full operation. This prominent Vaishnava organization also has a temple in Antwerp, Belgium.

Purohit Krishna Kripa Dasa of Spain tells us there are about 20 temples in his country. "Most are in existing buildings; only two or three were specially constructed as temples. In the future we would like to apply to the government for a plot of land. But Hindus are scattered around the country, so choosing a central place is difficult."

In Italy the Sanatana Dharma style mandir is common. In the northern regions of Veneto, Lombardy and Liguria and the southern island of Sicily, all but one of the five temples we visited originated as a simple hall, repurposed to honor a pantheon of Deities. In Arzignano, an hour west of Venice, the 12-year-old Sanatan Dharm Mandir is located on the rented second floor of a non-descript bodybuilding gymnasium

in an industrial area. The Shree Durgiana Mandir, nestled between farm fields in bucolic Castelveverde, and the tiny Doorga Maa Mandir, tucked in the ancient Sicilian city of Catania, manage in similar situations. Kumar Pradeep, president of the Arzignano temple, shared, "During festivals, we always invite the mayor, the police and the Catholic priest. They always have good things to say. We really feel that we are part of the community."

The Shri Hari Om Mandir in Pegognaga, Italy, tells another story. Of the many shrines serving the Punjabi and Bangladeshi communities that dot the northern Italian landscape, only this, to our knowledge, is currently being built from the ground up. So far four years in construction, it is already being used for pujas and festivals, the fully furnished kitchen turning out *puri bhaji* meals for hundreds each weekend. But they are struggling to raise the remaining €500,000 (US\$687,000) needed to finish. Ravinder Handa, the temple's treasurer, revealed, "We have started a direct debit system with the bank. Members are signing up to make regular donations. Each month, an amount they specify—€20, €30, €50 (\$25, \$40, \$70)—is automatically transferred from their accounts into the temple's account." This mandir promises to become an oasis of Hinduism in an otherwise bleak terrain of factories, warehouses, vineyards and near-empty churches.

In Switzerland, Dr. Satish Joshi told us the

Sri Lankan Tamils used to meet at the Hare Krishna temple in Zurich. "Now they have 22 temples of their own." The newest is the Sri Manonmani Ampal Alayam, a grand, South-Asian-style temple in Trimbach. Arriving on the last day of a festival, we were treated to a full round of aratis at the temple's powerful shrines. Costing \$3.3 million, the temple had just been inaugurated in March, 2013, after four years of construction and almost three years of Indian decoration. Backed by evergreen forest with an intercity rail line winding by, it is a charming picture of sylvan Switzerland. Mr. V. Ramalingam, the manager, shared, "Now people from all over Germany and Switzerland are coming."

In bustling Berlin, the borough of Neukölln boasts two temples. The Sri Ganesha Tempel is located in the auspicious northeast corner of the 50-hectare Volkspark Hasenheide. Its start in 2006 is a tale of Ganesha's grace. Mr. Krishnamurthy related, "I was a member of the borough council at the time. The mayor once asked why I had missed a meeting. I explained we all go to the Hamm temple for the big celebrations, and he asked why we couldn't build a temple in Berlin. I said, 'If you give us land, we will build it as soon as possible'—and he replied, 'Then I will give you a place.' He quickly proposed five options. This one was in the park, and the house number was 108."

Not far away, the Sri Mayurapathy Murugan Tempel operated for 22 years out of a humble cellar on Urbanstrasse before a new

building was erected in the nearby neighborhood of Britz. The committee took us to see the new temple, where the plaster work was nearly finished and the painting was just beginning (see its brilliantly painted vimanam on our gatefold). This temple's kumbhabhishekam was held September 7, just two months after our visit.

The Sri Lankan Tamil community has at least two dozen more temples in Germany,

reactor. Signs direct cars toward the parking for the Sri Kamadchi Ampal Tempel, the most famous temple in the northern part of the Continent. Over 25,000 pilgrims from all over Europe descend on this magical little citadel for its annual festival in May/June. Sri Paskara Gurukkal, the unassuming yet charismatic priest, came to Germany in 1985 and started the temple four years later. He insists all credit for its success is owed to the Goddess, not to himself.

The three-story Hari Om Mandir is a stone's throw from the Rhine in the Mülheim district of Cologne. The newest of seven Afghan Hindu temples in Germany, it was still just a concrete shell when we visited. The topmost story will be the temple hall. Below that will be a full-size auditorium; the ground floor will be classrooms. Representatives told us, "When it is finished, we will have music, Bharatanatyam, German, Hindi and religion classes."

The Balinese community have built their own temples in this region. Luh Gede Juli Wirahmini Bis-terfeld works for the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg. "First the museum asked me to build a Balinese house," she began. "When we celebrated the opening with our traditional dancing and music, the head of the museum was really happy. He asked what they could do for our community, and we said, 'Why not build a temple?' Such a question only ever comes once!" After a year of permitting and planning, permission was given to build the temple in the garden right



VASAANT KRISHNAN



HINDUISM TODAY

(left to right) Trustees show off the model of the upcoming Templo de Shiva in Lisbon; devotees perform abhishekam at the Doorga Maa Mandir in Catania; the basement entry to Berlin's original Sri Mayurapathy Murugan Tempel juxtaposed with the new structure's finished gopuram; the new, incomplete Sri Manonmani Ampal Alayam in Trimbach, Switzerland. (above right) Priest Srinivasan performs archana at the Sri Ganesha Tempel in Berlin.

Germany & Switzerland



BERLIN HINDU MAHASABHA E.V. INSET: HINDUISM TODAY



HINDUISM TODAY

Portugal & Italy



in front of the museum. Now priests brought from Bali perform the customary purification ceremonies on the lunar cycle and the festivals, such as Saraswati and Pagerwesi, that are so central to Balinese Hindu culture.

Made Sukasta told us the biggest Balinese temple outside the home country is in a 55-acre jungle theme park called Paira Daiza in Brugelette, near Brussels. Like the Iraivan Temple that was carved in Bengaluru and shipped to Kauai, this structure was carved in Bali and shipped to Belgium. Inaugurated in 2009, the traditional stone and wood Pura Agung Santi Bhuwana looks right at home surrounded by a landscape of tropical plants brought in from Bali.

The Shree Raam Mandir in Wijchen, in the remote eastern part of the Netherlands, is one of many temples serving that country's large Surinamese Hindu community. A representative explained, "We have three services every day, and we sing bhajan kirtans each evening after the pandit teaches from the *Ramayan* or *Bhagavad Gita*." On Tuesdays the Hanuman Chalisa is sung 11 times in place of the usual discourse and bhajans.

In the town of Den Helder on the North Holland peninsula, the Sri Lankan refugee community has built Holland's first Ganesha temple. Begun in 1991, it was re-opened in September 2013 with the dedication of its new 18-meter gopuram. Clive Roberts, who lives in nearby Kolhorn, observed, "I have seen many temples, but to approach this one in Holland—not India or Sri Lanka—is very

touching. You could stand and study the detail of all the figures for ages, and never encompass the whole. The colors are striking and beautifully bright; it almost overwhelms the senses." In 2000, when the temple was just a room loaned by the local civic council, Clive and his wife Puvaneswary met with Chandran, one of the temple committee members. "He showed us the plans for the



NIRAJ THAKER

temple. It seemed impossibly ambitious, but they had faith that it would manifest."

Our UK correspondent, Niraj Thaker, journeyed to distant Vienna, Austria, to explore the temples there. He wrote, "A small door on Lamngasse leads to the Hindu Mandir Organization's temple in the basement of a building, much like the entrance to a cave temple in India. Hindus from various parts of Vienna and Austria converge on this beautiful, elaborate, North Indian style shrine. A

small BAPS Swaminarayan group holds their weekly satsangs here, too. I was impressed to see so many from the North and South of India coming together to worship."

The large hall, with all the murtis enshrined at the front—Durga in the center here—is common to most of the provisional temples we encountered throughout the Continent. Murli Lalwani, the temple's president, lamented, "We have been trying for 20 years to build a proper temple. The government has proposed various sites, but every time it hasn't materialized due to bureaucracy." They have raised the necessary funds and intend to start as soon as the latest proposal—a historic building, the inside of which they will be allowed to renovate into a temple—is finalized.

A small room in Vienna's Afro-Asian Institute, an interreligious meeting place, is home to another shrine. Dr. Bimal Kundu, the priest, shared, "We began in 1980 by celebrating Dussehra, Durga Puja, and it was very successful."

Currently, up to 40 attend the weekly puja and satsang.

A cluster of well-kept rented buildings in Vienna's Meidling district is home to the Sri Sri Radha Govinda Gaudiya Math, founded in 2001 by Srimad Bhakti Vaibhava Puri Goswami Maharaj and headed by Tridandi Swami Bhakti Sadhak Muni, an Austrian who lived in India and Sri Lanka from 1977 to 1998. Residents follow an intensive daily schedule of bhakti sadhanas and classes, and

a growing Indian immigrant population now constitutes 80 percent of attendance at pujas, Swami explained. Under the banner of the Society for Hindu Gaudiya Vaishnavas, they have plans to build a permanent temple on an 8,000-square-meter parcel outside Vienna in the next couple years.

France has only a handful of temples; we visited two of these in Paris. Just outside the city in the quiet suburb of Gretz-Armainvilliers is the Centre Védantique, an old country mansion turned teaching facility for the Ramakrishna Mission (see page 29). It also serves as a temple for the local Hindu community, particularly during major festivals, such as Mahasivaratri.

The 18th *arrondissement* of Paris, just north of two of the city's six major train stations, is home to the Sri Manika Vinayakar Alayam, known locally and by the sign above its unassuming entry as "Temple Ganesh." Though it had to move twice since its beginning in 1958, this unexpectedly small fixture of the Parisian Hindu community hasn't lost steam. For the past 18 years it has conducted a massive Ganesha festival such as is seldom seen outside India and Sri Lanka. Replete with kavadi bearers, temple drummers, dancers and mountains of broken coconuts, the elaborate chariot parade wends through the Paris streets every September on Ganesha Chaturthi.

This temple was founded by V. Sandarasekaram, who passed away in April 2013. Mr. Jeyaratnam, the manager, described the need: "He found that most of the people who had left Sri Lanka because of the problems there were displaced and didn't have somewhere to gather. Here they could come in for medita-

tion, and they could be advised as to how they should conduct themselves in this foreign country."

For most Hindus, temples offer a palpable connection to the Divine. They are the abode of God, the arena for festivals and rites of passage, the chalice of culture and nexus of worship. Therefore, we build temples wherever we live—temples of all sizes and shapes, temples of modern as well as traditional architectural style, temples for Vinayaga, Durga, Murugan,

Vishnu, Siva, Rama and more, with joyous festivals and colorful parades for all—attracting many from the local European community back to their ancient roots. Historians tell us the mystical tribes of early Europe had much in common with Hinduism, and the Celts, Hellenes and Druids worshiped Lingam-shaped stones. Though their own temples now lie in ruins, the ancients would feel quite at home in the Hindu temples coming up on the same lands where they once worshiped. 🍷



COURTESY CLIVE ROBERTS

Austria, Belgium & the Netherlands



COURTESY MADE SUKASTA



HINDUISM TODAY

(left to right) Pura Agung Santi Bhuwana, the Balinese temple set in Paira Daiza in Brugelette, Belgium, even has mock rice terraces among the landscaping; main Deities of the Shree Raam Mandir in Wijchen, the Netherlands; reopening ceremonies following completion of the new gopuram at the Sri Varatharaja Selvavinayagar Temple in Den Helder, the Netherlands. (above left) Devotees gather for bhajans at the Hindu Mandir Association's basement shrine in Vienna, Austria.

Three European Monasteries

In Italy, Switzerland and France, three ascetic orders hold firmly to their holy heritage

MONASTERIES HAVE HISTORICALLY preserved Hindu dharma through their steadfast discipline and institutional longevity. Ashrams come and go, but monasteries persevere; so it is heartening to find strong, traditional monasteries far from India.

Italy's Gitananda Ashram lies twelve kilometers inland from Savona on the Mediterranean Sea. It is a remote retreat, a surprising location for such a major Hindu center. Founded in 1984 by Sri Svami Yogananda Giri and named after his spiritual master, the renowned Dr. Svami Gitananda Giri of Ananda Ashram in South India [1907–1993], the monastery is profoundly grounded in spiritual sadhana, temple worship, sannyas and service to the guru, whose prowess might be overlooked given his unpretentious and placid nature, until you encounter his creation.

The center lies on 20 acres, surrounded by dense forests of chestnut trees and accessible only by a one-way, unpaved path that winds five kilometers to the nearest road. This is not an easy place to reach, but it is well worth the effort.

A cluster of two-story buildings provide accommodation for the sannyasins and for retreatants who come for seminars on yoga and Hinduism. The grounds are a lavish display of colorfully painted shrines and mur-

tis—Ganesha, Murugan, Siva and His other half, the merciful Mother Goddess—singing a song of South Indian art and architecture.

Some years ago this Italian monastery brought a team of sthapatis and silpis from Tamil Nadu to build an Agamic, Chola-style temple for the Divine Mother, Sri Lalita Tripurasundari, the main Deity worshiped in the Sri Vidya tradition. Built of concrete and plaster, the temple captures the South Indian tradition in brightly painted splendor. Winters are cold here, with one to three meters of snow—which the monks must sometimes tunnel through, igloo-style, to get from building to building—so this temple is fully enclosed and amply heated.

The temple is the central focus of worship and sadhana. Svami Yogananda Giri himself performs the noon puja each day. From morning to near midnight the holy sanctum is visited, pujas performed by the monks, offerings of fragrant flowers made (they grow 5,000 rose bushes just for offerings), musical praises proffered, inner quiet discovered.

Twice daily, without fail, they gather to sing the entire Sri Lalita Sahasranama. This began years back when the guru was in the hospital and the community gathered to implore divine intervention on his behalf.

When he recovered, they expected this difficult daily discipline would cease, but he urged them to continue—observing that devotees can't go to the Goddess only when in need. They should always fall at Her feet, whatever life's circumstances may be. Obediently, they have continued, and the power of their persistent devotion is palpable.

Sri Yogananda Giri has become Italy's foremost Hindu spiritual figure, and today his temple is a pilgrimage place for all Europeans. As the monastery has almost no parking, thousands of devotees walk the five-kilometer trail on Ganesha Chaturthi, children in tow, singing and carrying offerings of fruit and flowers for the Lord of Obstacles.

Guided by Svami, the sannyasins have recently changed the status of Hinduism under Italian law. For centuries Italy only recognized the Abrahamic religions, treating members of Eastern faiths as second-class citizens. In 1996 Swami set out to change this, and on February 2, 2013, an agreement between the Italian State and the Italian Hindu Union became law, an historic accomplishment that celebrates a pluralistic nation.

Thanks to sixteen years of effort by many—especially Jayendranatha, Svamini Ma Uma Sakti Giri and Svamini Hamsananda Giri—Hinduism and Buddhism are now officially recognized religions with all rights and protections, including acceptance of marriage ceremonies, protection of temples, more support for schools and limited state funding. (See our complete article at bit.ly/ItalianForum).

There is profound emphasis here on sannyas and the strict spirit of renunciation. Each initiated monk is required to surren-

der the world, to serve obediently, to seek the Self within daily and to live with yogic detachment freed of concerns for "me and mine." The monks do virtually everything themselves, from carpentry to plumbing, from growing food to splitting wood for the life-sustaining winter fires (100,000 kg are cut and stacked each year).

They teach yoga to hundreds of visitors, hold the major annual festivals, guide the spiritual lives of thousands and still have time to raise a breed of large spaniels and

cook fresh pizza twice a month in a wood-fired oven. At Lakshmi, their publishing arm, the monks do their own design and editing, in several languages, on Apple computers. This is a well-honed team guided by an awakened guru, humble as individuals but amazingly adept as an order.

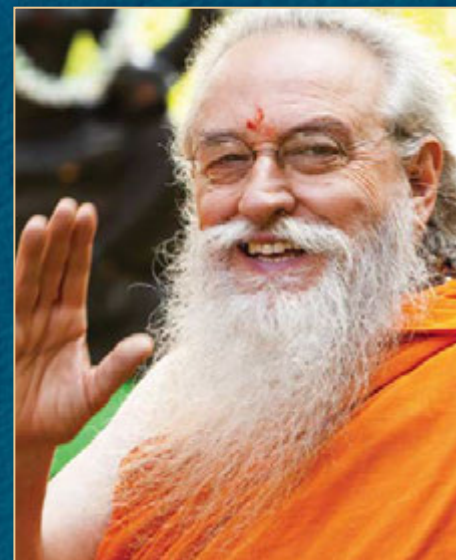
Their self-sufficiency is beautifully expressed in dozens of ornate shrines proudly lining the pathways. While the Indian silpis were here for ten months building the temple, the monks took pains to learn the craft.

After the silpis left, the monks designed, built, sculpted and painted these delightful Chola-style monuments, each enshrining a Hindu Deity. There are ten forms of the Goddess Sri Lalita Tripurasundari as well as Siva, Ganesha, Valli-Devayanai-Shanmukha, Panchamukha Ganapati, Durga Mahadevi, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Sheshanaga Narayanar, Sri Akara-Ukara-Makara (three murtis representing Pranava Aum). There is even a rare series of 51 enshrined murtis representing the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY GITANANDA ASHRAM

Gitananda Ashram: a delightful discovery in northern Italy



Serving God and guru: (left to right:) Inside the Sri Lalita Tripurasundari Temple, with its distinctive South Indian art and architecture; Svami Yogananda Giri, founder and spiritual leader of Italy's Gitananda Ashram, named after his spiritual master, Dr. Svami Gitananda Giri of Ananda Ashram in Pondicherry, South India; the guru stands proudly with his sannyasins and brahmacharinis, flanked by his two guests, editors of HINDUISM TODAY. (above) The ornate, Agamically designed temple to Divine Mother has become a sanctuary for Hindus and seekers throughout Europe.

Any Hindu visiting Italy will be blessed to visit the Svami Gitananda Ashram, and doubly blessed to meet the good souls who have given their life to build this spiritual citadel for Europe's growing Hindu community.

Omkananda Ashram in Switzerland

Winterthur lies 1,400 feet above sea level in northern Switzerland, not far from Zurich. A hilly residential suburb is home to the Omkananda Ashram and Divine Light Center, a loose cluster of ten unassuming buildings. Here live some 25 monks and nuns, led by initiated renunciates in saffron robes.

To understand the Swiss ashram, one must understand its gifted founder, Paramahansa Omkananda Saraswati. Born in 1930 in South India, he was initiated into sannyas by Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh when he was just seventeen. His accomplishments and institutions are legendary in India. From his high-tech ashram on the Ganges, followers run 26 schools and two dance and music academies. (See our full story of his life and work here: bit.ly/OmkanandaAshram).

In 1966 the young swami was inwardly directed to teach seekers in Europe. He founded his first European center in Switzerland; later he established a major ashram in Austria, with centers in Germany, England and France. Ultimately he initiated nearly 200 sannyasins and sannyasinis, who have faithfully run his centers since his mahasamadhi in Austria in 2000.

The heart of the community is a three-story edifice containing the multi-room temple where Swami's shrine is honored. This powerful chamber is filled day and night with the compelling voice of Swami Omkanan-

da chanting the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra. Puja is a central sadhana for the monastics—long, elaborate, devotionally charged rites to Lord Siva, to the Mother Goddess and to Swami. Room after room is filled with mur-



COURTESY OMKANANDA ASHRAM

tis, each space devoted to a different divine energy. Sri Rudram is chanted in one shrine while a homa is performed simultaneously in another. Devotional music and dance are offered to God and guru.

In a special glass-enclosed shrine on an upper floor, the monks have kept a remarkable peace vigil. Since 1974 they have taken turns performing an Akhanda-Sarva-Devata havan (fire ceremony). Seated at the havan, the orange-clad renunciates chant and offer wood, ghee and prayers into the holy fire,

prayers for "the peace, progress and prosperity of all mankind." For decades this shanti homa was perpetual, 24 hours a day, but now it is tended during the day as staff permits.

Outlying buildings hold the computer publishing offices, auditorium, kitchens, residences and classrooms. The ashram runs a dynamic publishing program, which includes two newsletters drawing from a vast archive of Sri Swami Omkananda's philosophical discourses. He was a true orator, witty, incisive, poetic, a master at moving the spiritual forces of all in his presence. The lecture hall, library and reading rooms serve a steady stream of seekers and pilgrims who come to learn of yoga and Hinduism as taught by the founder. While most of the monastics are European, visitors to this religious sanctuary are mostly Hindus who have immigrated to the country.

Omkananda Ashram in Austria

Sri Swami Omkananda's Austrian monastery was established in 1985 in the foothills of the Alps, surrounded by forest. Boasting Europe's largest Meru Sri Chakra and a library of over 40,000 spiritual books, it has 25 sannyasins and brahmacharinis in residence. Pujas and havans are regularly performed in the temple shrines, and Vedic mantras and slokas are recited. As in Winterthur, the sadhakas follow a strict Sri Vidya tradition toward achieving life's highest goal: Self Realization.

Swami Omkananda was boldly Hindu. Unlike many, he was unafraid of using the H-word in public. His was a mystical path, strongly founded on mantra yoga, meditation and worship of the Divine. His emphasis on

the guru-shishya relationship sustains those who fell at his feet during life. A central teaching was: "Practice the yoga of synthesis. Be a karma yogi, bhakti yogi, raja yogi, mantra yogi, jnana yogi. Love the all-pervading, all-knowing God with all your heart and soul. Experience Him here and now, and distribute the fruits of that experience to all mankind."

The Vedanta Center in France

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Centers have come up throughout the world and have been known for over a hundred years as enclaves of pure Advaita Vedanta. Their monks receive instruction at any of their facilities around the world, serving three years as a pre-probationer and then two more years as a probationer living at Belur Math in India. If qualified, they take vows of chastity, renunciation and service. A brahmachari who passes the next four years of rigorous training is ordained into sannyas at Belur Math and given the saffron robes of a swami.

Europe has Vedanta centers in Germany, France, Netherlands, England, Switzerland and Russia. Most also serve as small monasteries, headed by one of the order's 800-plus sannyasins who oversees the religious life of residents and provides teachings and outreach into the local community.

The Centre Védantique monastery in Gretz-Armainvilliers, France, a rural town twenty miles southeast of Paris, was founded in 1948. Since 1990 it has been under the spiritual leadership of Swami Veetamohananda, the resident administrator and primary teacher. Originally from Bengal, Swami was initiated as a monk in 1971 following ten

years of training in Chennai and Kolkata. He is a gifted musician, both vocal and instrumental, and a key member of the interfaith movement in France. He writes prolifically and travels often to perform pujas and to speak on Vedanta, especially the *Gita* and Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, which he believes encompass the entire Indian religious tradition.

Nearly all of Swami's followers are French. He notes, "Europeans admire the Hindu ideals of tolerance and calmness and therefore accept Hinduism readily." The Hindus in and around Paris are mostly from the French Colony of Pondicherry, with a growing Sri Lankan presence, but visitors come from all over Europe for the ceremonies and feasts, for lectures and interfaith gatherings, to see Swami or participate in the Hindu form of communal life.

A three-story mansion houses the monastery's temple, bookstore, Swami's quarters, classrooms, kitchen and dining facilities. Newer facilities house residents and guests. The 13-acre property also has cow pastures and four beehives.

Three monks live at the center along with nine spiritual aspirants, five men and four women. Residents share the myriad duties of every spiritual community—the reception of visitors, building and grounds maintenance, housework, cooking, etc. All are committed to a simple life of pujas, meditation, spiritual discourse, daily service and special events for the public. Up to 150 visitors come for major festivals, like Mahasivaratri. The center has little other engagement with the local community, though it responds to calls for assistance.

The day here begins at 6am with fifteen minutes of mantras and 45 minutes of silence. This is followed by sacred singing and readings from the *Bhagavad Gita* and the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna. Breakfast is at 8:00, followed by the day's karma yoga. From 11am to noon there is puja, which is optional. A veggie lunch at noon is followed by a short siesta and then afternoon seva. Tea is served at 4:30. An evening meditation and prayer is held from 6:30 to 7:15; dinner is at 7:30. After dinner is a scriptural reading, and by 9:30 all residents are free to retire.

In addition to this daily routine are regular weekly pujas, satsangs and classes. The monastery also offers monthly and seasonal residential learning programs.

This system of community-scaled monasteries, networked together and reaching into major cities around the globe, has proven immensely effective and enduring, all due to the training, sadhana and dedication of the swamis of the Ramakrishna Order.

One rightly expects to find Hindu temples, institutions and ashrams in Europe, and they are there in abundance as our feature stories reveal. That there are also serious monasteries in these Western nations, headed by well-schooled, well-trained spiritual leaders and run by cenobites from many nations is both a surprise and a delight.

Omkananda Ashram in the Swiss and Austrian Alps



A global spiritual and educational network: (above) The swamis of Omkananda Ashram perform guru puja for their founder, Paramahansa Omkananda Saraswati [1930–2000]; (inset) massive Sri Chakra yantra installed at the Austrian ashram.



OMKANANDA ASHRAM



Main building of the Centre Védantique Ramakrishna complex near Paris, founded in 1948; (right) Swami Veetamohananda, head of the French center.



Becoming “Hindu European”

Living in a new land presents challenges and opportunities and requires civic engagement

WHEN WE TRANSPLANT OURSELVES to a foreign land, we naturally seek to make our new neighbors feel comfortable with us. We also seek to preserve our own cultural and religious traditions, and we hope the next generation will carry them forward. We find various ways to approach the cultural blending that naturally takes place, but it is never without its challenges and an ineluctable sense of uncertainty.

Interfaith Marriage

Marriage is one way in which immigrants blend with a local community. In Portugal and Italy, overall rates of intermarriage are low, but those immigrant communities are also young. In Spain and Germany, we were told that boys marry outside the faith far more than girls do. Mr. Krishnamurthy described the approach that the Sri Ganesha Tempel in Berlin is taking to this phenomenon: “To my knowledge, ours is the only temple in Europe hosting interfaith marriages. We know we are living in Germany, and if our children are going on a different path, we want to catch them and bring them back again. So we encourage them to marry here. Then their children grow up with us as a part of our community. If we say ‘no,’ we push them away.”

Luh Gede Juli Wirahmini Bisterfeld

seemed to have arrived at a balanced perspective about her daughter's future: “I think if she marries a Balinese I would be happy about it, but if she doesn't, it's no problem. What is important is that Hinduism is already in her. I think my duty as a mother is to bring her into the awareness of Hinduism.”

In the Netherlands, 80 percent of extended families have at least one interracial marriage, but Bikram Lalbahadoersing cautioned that the divorce rate among Hindus there is estimated at between 20 and 40 percent. “Here, the women have more education, freedom and money than they did in Suriname.” This, he said, creates a clash with men who maintain a more traditional perspective.

The Second Generation

Parents have extra decisions to make. Dr. Satish Joshi explained that he and his Swiss wife gave their children a choice. “My son and daughter have grown up Christian, not Hindu—not because of my wife's influence, but because of the atmosphere. The situation which we cannot change is that we are not in India, we are in Switzerland, which is a Western, Christian civilization.”

Nitharshan Sharma Kurukkal, 19, is a priest at Frankfurt's Sri Nagapooshani Amman Kovil. “The younger generation doesn't come to temple, and the parents don't seem to care. They think, ‘We're in a foreign coun-

try now. Education is what's important. We can teach them religion another time.”

The priest of the Sanatan Dharm Mandir in Arzignano, Italy, said their young people are active because they are put in charge of *seva* (service activities). “They explained that because we give them freedom, they don't feel they want to escape from something.” They are fluent in Italian, and when they go to school they dress like the other children—but at home they speak Punjabi, and when coming to the temple they dress in Indian clothes.

Ram Pratap Thapa, Consul General of Nepal in Cologne, Germany, shared, “As long as their parents are alive, there's no problem. But once they are alone and they have no attachment with Nepalese culture, then it may be a problem.”

Post-War Challenges

For the Sri Lankan Tamils in Switzerland, Mr. Ramalingam, who manages the temple in Trimbach, explained that even though the civil war in Sri Lanka ended, the political and fund-raising apparatus established across Europe to support it remains more or less intact. This effort causes strain in the community. “We don't want to be involved,” states Ramalingam. “We are a religious and cultural organization. We have left Sri Lanka; it's finished there. We are working well with the Swiss government, but if we don't stay politically neutral that will become difficult. This is very important for the future of the second generation, because their life is here.”

Vivek Ojha said of the Czech Hindu community, “The main challenge is to form a temple here, and for that we need international support. We also need moral support, because we had communism here for a long time, and we couldn't engage in any religious activities.”

Progress Toward Legal Recognition

Of the nine nations we visited, only the Netherlands and Italy have given Hinduism full legal recognition as a religion—Italy only since February 2, 2013. The Italian Hindu Union had worked with the Italian government since 1996 toward this end, and its persistence paid off: Hindu marriages are now recognized by law, and Hindu organizations are given the same legal protections, state funding and other advantages as those of any other recognized religion. In addition, the law now requires that employers allow Hindus to celebrate Diwali as a paid holiday.

Sri Paskara Gurukkal of Hamm, Germany, has made significant progress toward legal recognition of Hinduism in his country. On June 17, 2013, his Sri Kamadchi Ampal Tempel was granted full status as a religious organization—placing it in the same category as a Christian church. “I have been working on this court case for ten years, and finally it was heard,” he rejoiced. Hindu weddings performed at his temple will now be legal as well. Other temples wishing to obtain the same status, he said, “have to apply pressure to their local courts.” They will surely benefit from his pioneering work.

Hindus in other countries are just beginning the process of seeking legal recognition. Mukundrabhai Joshi noted that in Austria, Hinduism currently has the status of a “registered” religion. This differs from full recognition, which is presently given to fifteen religions, including Buddhism and Islam. For Hinduism to achieve full recognition, the census must show at least 2/10 of one percent of the population—roughly 16,000 people—belonging to the religion. Joshi pointed out that the various isolated groups of Hindus must come together to make this happen.

Community Integration and Outreach

Once established, a Hindu community has a choice: to engage with the population in meaningful ways, or to remain apart. Groups involved in community projects earn respect, acceptance and good will.

At the Templo de Shiva in Lisbon, Pradeep Lalit Kumar told us, “Our temple is open for everyone. We are using our pavilion for various sports, and the facilities are available for all to use.” The Portuguese government, in turn, offers classes in computers, language, even hairdressing, to promote employment.

In Spain, on the other hand, there is no help from the government; in fact, officials look upon Hindus with suspicion, thinking them odd and cultish.

Italians respect the Hindu work ethic and even join in temple bhajans. Oddly, it is the Hindus there that are divided. Svamini Hamsananda Giri explained, “There is this mentality to divide, divide, divide. Strangely, Hindus are friends with Italians but not friends among their own.”

Berlin's Sri Ganesha Tempel works with the local high schools, inviting students from as many as 30 schools each year to learn about Hinduism.

In conservative Switzerland, Hinduism is perceived as foreign—and therefore suspect. The Omkarananda Ashram works to counter this, providing language studies, career training and counseling—a model for others to emulate. Dr. Joshi divulged one of the unspoken problems: “There is what I call optical pollution.” Immigrants from the subcontinent visually stand out in a region where the local people are quite fair-skinned. “Because of the color, there is an uneasiness when half a dozen Hindus get together somewhere like the Bern train station.”

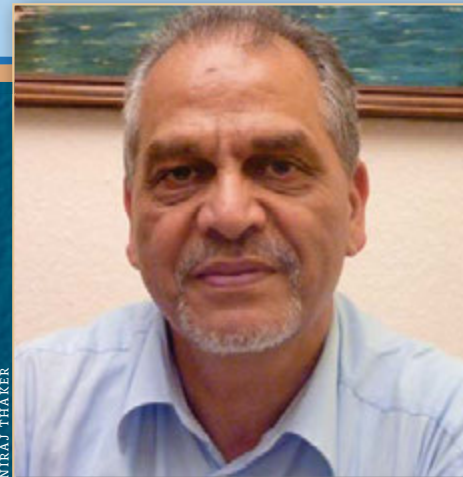
Language is frequently the biggest barrier; but as language skills evolve, community relations improve. This is dramatically seen in the second-generation Hindus born in Germany: they are accepted and fully engaged in society, something that was impossible for their parents.

Of all the Hindus in mainland Europe, the 200,000 in the Netherlands are the most fully integrated. They enjoy their government's largesse. Radio and television broadcasting services are provided to Hindu groups at no cost. Even in prisons, satsang is provided, and flowers and incense for puja. Prisoners are encouraged to have shrines in their cells. Hindus have become part of the social and political network and now have access to the corridors of power.

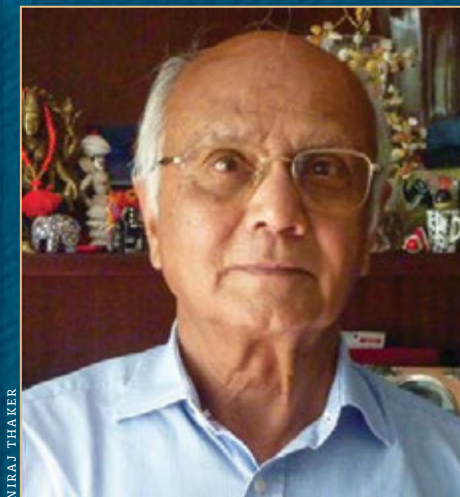
Andras Sukub, the president of the Prague Hindu Society, offered that the Czech people are open to all things Indian. Vivek Ojha described his family's *seva*: “My wife runs a hostel for indigent mothers with children. We provide clothes, food, education and computer classes for about 200.” Despite all this, the Czech media are critical of Hinduism, so more work remains to be done toward full acceptance by the community.

The vast majority of Hindus in Europe are living peaceably and amicably. A basic challenge for immigrants is to fully adopt their new nation as home, to self-identify as Hindu Europeans rather than as Hindus living in a foreign land. It takes two or three generations for a new group to become an intrinsic part of society. In the decades to come, with wisdom and the knowledge of its incompatible culture and philosophy, Hinduism will become recognized as a precious gem in the multi-colored mosaic that is Europe.

Insights into integration



(left to right) Luh Gede Juli Wirahmini Bisterfeld, Nitharshan Sharma Kurukkal, Ram Pratap Thapa, Sri Paskara Gurukkal, V. Ramalingam, Mukundrabhai Joshi



Portugal Takes the Lead

World Yoga Day in Lisbon has depth and breadth

YOGA IS BURGEONING ACROSS THE globe, a wildfire that is part fad, part the offspring of the new health consciousness and part genuine awakening of mankind's spiritual aspirations. Tens of thousands meet for yoga in New York City's Times Square. Worldwide, major yoga festivals are blooming like wildflowers in spring. All of this brings yoga spas, yoga copyrights, yoga lawsuits, naked yoga, yoga championships, yoga raves, chocolate yoga (it's true)—yoga everything.

In Europe, yoga is a common portal into Hinduism. As elsewhere, people are attracted to hatha yoga, to the well-advertised classes and social events. There they are exposed to new ideas, to deeper perceptions of their identity, to mystical possibilities or perhaps to a charismatic teacher. They engage in simple worship and bhajans. Wanting to learn more, they soon find themselves at the well from which all yogis drink—Hinduism.

As a counterweight to the sometimes ec-centric ways in which yoga is taught today, Portugal gives us World Yoga Day, the inspiration of Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda, a native of Portugal trained and initiated in India and now head of the Yoga Portuguese Confederation. World Yoga Day has become a popular annual gathering, combining hatha

yoga with the deeper levels of practice and research. Held on the summer solstice, in 2013 it was celebrated on June 22–23.

The first full day of the event was held in the Forum Lisboa theater from 8am to 11:30pm. Experts from all over the world gathered to give dozens of 15-minute talks ranging from medical research to philosophy, educational initiatives and “how yoga changed my life” stories from the trenches. There were entertaining skits, dramas and world-class hatha yoga demonstrations.

From these talks a single voice emerged: that yoga is spiritual, yoga is Hindu, yoga has to be understood beyond asana, yoga should be a part of every nation's health care.

Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda gathered the crème-de-la-crème of yoga experts and researchers for this event. His shishyas did an amazing work, and their care of all who came was touching, filled with the spirit of service and guru bhakti. This team is dedicated, talented and deeply immersed in traditional sadhanas—a rare group in the world and one which will clearly make a difference in yoga's future in Europe.

HINDUISM TODAY interviewed Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda at his rural ashram:

HT: You have placed great emphasis in developing the shishyas and instilling in them

the values of sadhana, of serious, transformational work. You seem to have done that better than most. How have you achieved that?

AS: We practice yoga every day. We have a practice of four hours that is called “maha sadhana,” with all the fourteen technical disciplines. It starts with puja, kirtan and so on, and in the end dhyana, samadhi and then *mana-sika* (visualization). Through visualization we can build a better humanity.

We don't believe in types of yoga. For us, there's only yoga. In the beginning yoga was called *samkhya*. So, we follow a path of correct action, giving us twenty hours of practice in addition to those four of sadhana. Shishyas, the disciples, must perfect themselves constantly. We stress excellence in training and excellence in action.

HT: What are the requirements to study with you?

AS: My training lasts for six years, about 6,500 hours, followed by four more years of teacher training. Yoga masters take their first steps after another four years, so fourteen in all. I ask disciples to be a light, but a light that makes no shade and no shadow. That's the disciple's model, an initiatic model based on *diksha*, initiation. They must do all that without stress.

HT: You mentioned Siva puja earlier. How is that expressed in the life of the shishya?

AS: Everything I do, I do for Lord Siva. In all our ashramas we have Siva Nataraja, and sometimes Siva Shankara. We offer incense, flowers, fire and sometimes kirtan, keeping



Siva in our sight. We are here to do exactly what has never been done.

HT: Some Hindus have a distaste for the word *Hinduism*. You seem to embrace it fully.

AS: Everything I know I learned in Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh. My gurus were Krishnananda and Chidanandaji of the Divine Life Society. Chidanandaji asked me not to invent, not to make up anything new, to follow strictly the *shastras*, to study and practice them profoundly. And never forget

that Bharat is the motherland of yoga. I have followed that.

HT: What are the principal service goals? What do you hope to achieve?

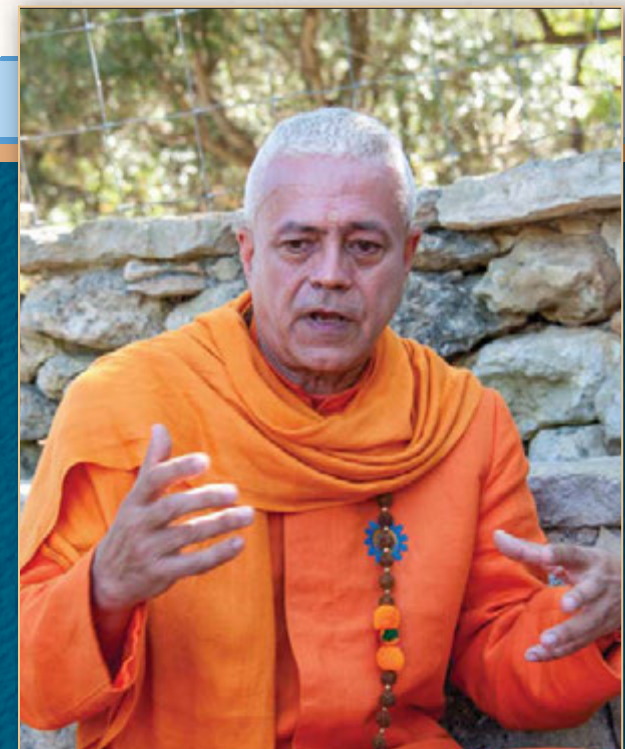
AS: Our main goal is to show the world that we are one planet and one race. We must all live here. It would be good if we could live healthy, peaceful lives and with a sense of enlightenment. We strive to show man that the planet Earth is not disconnected from all that is around. It has wa-

ter, green from the trees which give life, the millions of animals. We live in a place that's full of life. Let us protect life and do no harm to the cosmos. All human beings are allies because no one likes war. Everyone likes the love and peace they feel in their hearts. In all my travels not even one person has stood for war, defended war. No one ever said, “I am in favor of war.”

Celebrating Yoga's Renaissance



(clockwise from above) Over 1,000 Europeans gather on June 23 to celebrate yoga, watch demonstrations, listen to swamis from all over the world and take a “mega yoga class” on the grass; Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda during his interview; he addressed the World Yoga Day attendees at his ashram outside of Lisbon; yogis and organizers from many nations rejoice together in the full sun of the summer solstice.



We know that yoga is an extraordinary philosophy. Anyone who comes and practices yoga from any religion, even those who have no religion, if they start practicing, in just a little time they will change. Even those who don't believe will start feeling God.

Of course, yoga should always start on a foundation of yama and niyama, not otherwise. Another goal is that all the world practices yoga, and therefore we have created World Yoga Day and are working to get it recognized by the United Nations.

As in America and India, yoga teachers and students in Europe are mostly women. We asked one Portuguese yoga teacher why this is so. "Yes, there are more women than men in Portugal's yoga community. I would say 60 percent women and 40 percent men. I really don't know why. Maybe more women want their lives to change. Maybe women are more connected to the spiritual side of their lives. I do know that as the classes get more advanced, it is the men who drop out. Some Portuguese men think of it as not manly."

HINDUISM TODAY sat with a leadership group of nine shishyas of the ashram (SH) to ask about their life:

HT: What sacrifices do you make to follow your guru's path?

SH: Everyone can join him, each according to how fully you want to give up your life and just follow the guru. Some choose to keep their jobs in the world. You can also do that.

HT: If you choose to be 108 percent with the master, then you quit your job?

SH: You do. Those of us who are deeply committed do everything in the ashram. The ashram takes care of us, the ashram feeds us, the ashram puts clothes on our back. It's a

wonderful life.

HT: Share one principle you all live by.

SH: In our school we have a principle—don't judge others, judge only yourself, and to others be compassionate. See the best in others and only the best. That's the only way. The other way is war, and war is mad. Gururji often says that all wars are civil wars because we are all brothers.

The Overview


Precious little is known about yoga demographics in Europe and no serious studies or polls have been published. While yoga schools and classes in institutions provide a portal into Hinduism for thousands of Europeans, those who have been immersed in it for decades tend to find or create small sat-sangs that support their practice. Typically, these smaller groups are more advanced and far more serious about their spiritual work. They are loosely knit and may have followers of several gurus among them.

One such group can be found in and around Barcelona, Spain. They follow the teachings of Baba Muktananda and his initiated renunciate Swami Satyananda Saraswati, a Spanish sannyasin who spent three decades of intense solitary spiritual sadhana and study in India, mostly at Tiruvannamalai. The group, called Advaitavidya, has several hundred members from different parts of Spain who come for teachings and seminars on Hindu dharma, studying traditional texts under Swamiji's guidance. A thirty-strong core group follows deeper sadhanas and provides needed seva for seminars and retreats in the countryside. These are small, not like the massive Yoga Vidya center in Bad Mein-

berg, Germany.

In Switzerland, one Hindu elder noted, "Yoga is accepted by everyone and it is upcoming, but the Swiss don't connect it with Hinduism. Yoga here is very important, almost an industry. If you take a newspaper, you can find 20 or 30 advertisements for practicing yoga. Before, it was solely about relaxing after a day of professional stress. Now, yoga students really want to translate it into their day-to-day life. So, yoga takes over more of their day. There is also the argument, (expressed well in Letters, page 12), that Hinduism is the religion most similar to the ancient pagan faiths on the Continent.

Besides yoga, events and music in Europe provide windows into Hinduism. Thousands attend musical concerts showcasing bhajans and sacred music, some of which, to the Hindu's chagrin, are Bollywood style productions. Others are more traditional and inward. Some of the best kirtan groups in the world tour the Continent, drawing large crowds. A few, like Deva Premal's, have a spiritual increment, including traditional mantras such as the Gayatri, and others are purely entertainment. In Spain, concert goers believe that the spirit of bhakti aroused by bhajans can make their meditations easier.

Recently, Holi revelries are spreading their colorful, fun, free-for-all festivities among the young, who not infrequently become enamored of India as a result. India's many cultural tonalities resonate with Europe's new generation, who find these well-honed cultural fetes charming, different and socially engaging. Yoga's future in Europe seems decidedly in the ascendent. 

OPINION

My New Contract with Life

A Greek attorney leaves her profession, discovers yoga and now revels in the inner joys of her life-changing journey

BY MARIA MALEVITI

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, MY MOTHER USED TO tell me: "My love, learn to keep company with yourself." Probably without knowing, she laid the first small stone for the foundation of my knowledge that being alone is different from feeling lonely—thus setting up my future journey into yoga.

Back in 1999, still in the *pitta* phase of my life and working as a corporate lawyer for one of the largest law firms in Greece, there was a moment when I was lucky enough to perceive a feeling of uneasiness, that sense that something was wrong. There were so many different roles I had to play every day, and the passage from one to the other was not necessarily easy. Most importantly, I was not present in what I was doing. I felt that I was doing everything half-way, and I was full of remorse and guilt.

My body and soul started revolting. *Vikruti* (a state of imbalance) was definitely present! I knew there was a better place somewhere deep inside, a better world, and I wanted to find it. Having heard that yoga is good for you, that it brings balance and peacefulness, I decided to try it. But what to choose? I was not interested in balancing on a rock or shaping a yoga-calendar body; what I was looking for was peace. I wanted a yoga teacher who would neither play with my body, mind and soul nor take advantage of my vulnerability.

This turned out to be a difficult task: schools and teachers I came across were either too work-out, or too manipulative, or too religious, or too proselytizing, or too chatty, or too superficial, or too something. Finally, my destiny brought me to Eva Ruchpaul's Well-Tempered Hatha Yoga.

In those first classes I discovered that breathing is not only about O₂ and CO₂; it is also love and gratitude to the wisdom of the body. Slowly and gently, body, mind and soul started leaving the stiffness behind and connecting with one another.

The blocked energy in me started to flow. Attitudes toward myself, toward others and toward life were changing at a slow, steady pace. As time passed, I started seeing clearly: what I really wanted, what needed to be done, was to put an end to my 15-year legal career, with all the pros and cons one could imagine, and move into life's next chapter. It would take a lot of courage and time, but yoga had given me the powers of discernment and of clear intention. It was time to go ahead.

Two years after the legal identity was left behind and *prakruti* (harmony, balance) seemed to have the lead over *vikruti*, I realized that my life had deeply changed, thanks to my weekly yoga practice. At that moment it became unquestionably evident that the great gifts offered to me through yoga should further be offered to others. Sharing was not only a pure joy but a duty as well! How can one keep such treasure, such keys to evolution, to oneself? Passing on the tools



for becoming quiet, even to a single person, is of global importance and contributes to making today's world better.

Today our world suffers from lifestyle diseases because of wrong choices we make. It also suffers from the noise we make. And all this causes mental pain. Today more than ever, the mind needs help. We need to get back to the natural state of *sattva* (purity). And the best remedy is to know what is good, to make the right choices, to be patient, to know the Self, to calm down and to become creative. Simple, isn't it? Yoga does all that! In our modern world, where hatha yoga postures are used in so many different ways in so many schools, my teacher's technique suggests a subtle, fine, nonviolent, powerful, meditative and deeply transformative route.

The aim is to help Westerners breathe, find inner peace and quietness, being alert at the same time—to find their true nature and stay connected with it, while effortlessly juggling the challenges of everyday life. From her I learned to fully live in the modern world while enjoying the inner garden. From her I learned to be quiet without feeling lonely, to choose being in a state of silence against all odds. From her I learned to reconnect and to recharge in energy, and how to face any challenge more intelligently, more economically, almost playfully, as if it were easy.

She made no promises of acrobatic skills, or invulnerability, or perfection and definitely not superiority. She showed me how to open the gates to a physical, mental and spiritual well-being, to endurance, to self-knowledge, to self-acceptance, to growth and finally to transformation.

From her I learned that humanness gives us all the right, the duty and the possibility to take care of our inner world, to quiet the mind and to grow. It is not a luxury; it is a necessity, in order to reconnect with our true nature from which we keep deviating. This is why I truly believe that if everybody practiced yoga, the world would be better.

I will close by sharing a story. An elderly French gentleman went to Eva's school and asked to see her. "I suffer from incontinence," he confided. "Is there something your yoga could do about it?" Eva welcomed him into one of her groups. Time passed by and one day she asked: "How are things with your incontinence?" "Oh, great!" he replied. "You mean it's over?" she inquired. The man responded: "Oh no, I just don't care about it anymore!"

MARIA MALEVITI lives with her children and husband in Greece, where she teaches hatha yoga following the technique of Eva Ruchpaul. She travels to France and India, broadening her knowledge of yoga and ayurveda. E-mail: maleviti.maria@gmail.com

Belgium to Hold Europe's Largest India Expo

FROM OCTOBER, 2013 TO January, 2014, Brussels is presenting a lavish, multi-dimensional exhibition called *europalia.india*. It is Europe's largest expo of its kind—600 events held in over 300 locations. India's Minister Pranab Kumar Mukherjee and 1,000 VIPs came to Brussels for the launch, which was inaugurated by none other than Belgium's new King Philippe.

The expo covers India's take on a wide swath of subjects: death and birth, the nature of the cosmos, asceticism and ecstasy, water, theater, literature, sculpture, photography, fashion, architecture, music and movement (dance) and cinema (ok, Bollywood). Those interested in attending some of the events can begin their search here: bit.ly/BodyOfIndia.





EDUCATIONAL INSIGHT

Know Thy Self

14 Daily Enlightenment Lessons

From the teachings of
Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

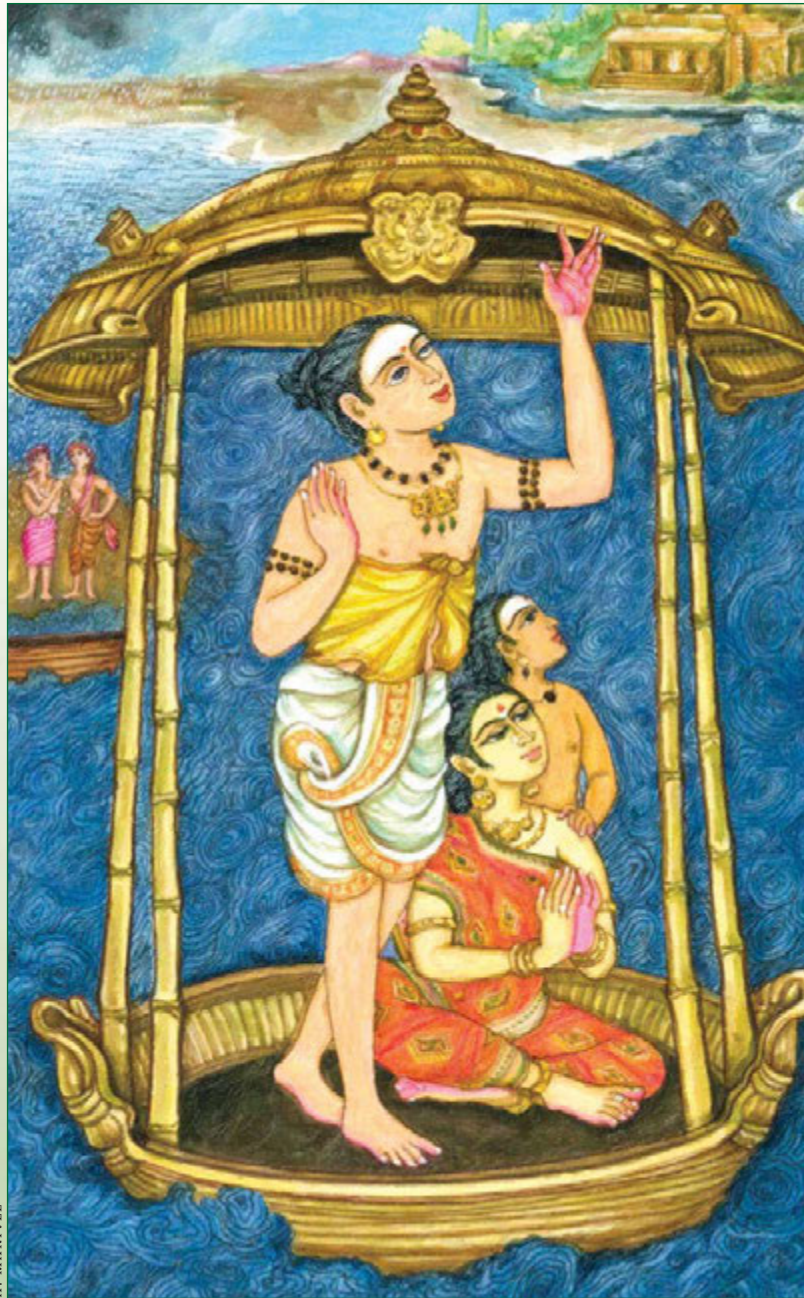


Many are the ways that can lead one to seek enlightenment—a spontaneous moment of ecstatic expanded consciousness, a fear-evoking brush with death, a random meeting with an extraordinary soul or the sudden realization that there must be more to this existence than sex, money, food, clothes and power. It matters little how we stumble upon the inner, spiritual path. What does matter is how we proceed once we discover it, what tradition we embrace, what techniques we employ. ¶ These fourteen lessons are designed to offer seekers a few keys about self-discovery from man's oldest spiritual tradition, one that is unique in its devotional nondualism. It is a simple reflection, neither advanced nor arcane. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami developed these lessons for seekers on the path who were inquiring about the intriguing metaphysical aspects of self-inquiry, like affirmations, karma, chakras and releasing strained magnetic attachments in life and relationships. Each lesson ends with a challenge to help put these principles into practice. India's great guru lineages teach the importance of knowing the inmost Self, the nondual Reality that exists as the silent core of every soul. ¶ In the East, this is called the Paramatman, or great Self. This is not the intellectual or emotional self. It is not the physical or personality self. This is the Divine Self deep within you. Knowing this Self is the true purpose of life on Earth. On the path to the Self, one thing is certain—change. And

the magic is that by changing your own consciousness and relationship with the world, you change the entire cosmos. ¶ The path requires you to first overcome fear, confusion, anger and selfishness. It then teaches you to live with detachment, with compassion for all other beings and with wisdom based on knowledge that all is right in the universe. Finally, the spiritual quest takes you from darkness to light, from death to immortality. Knowing who you are and what you should do, you naturally live poised in the eternal now, intuitively open, free of illusion and happy in heart. ¶ These fourteen lessons are a summary of life's path, from the beginning to the end. Read them each morning at breakfast. It will be fun for the whole family and give them a great start for the day. Each time they hear a lesson, it will be new and fresh to their mind because deeper insights will come. Take a lot of time with them under a special tree, or in your favorite chair or secret place. Listen to this ancient wisdom as being a message to you and you alone and absorb it into yourself as a one totality. ¶ To know thy Self is the greatest knowing of all knowings. To know thy Self is the greatest security of all securities. To know thy Self is the greatest wealth of all wealths. To know thy Self is the greatest path of all paths. Proceed with confidence; you are on the right path. Awake! Arise! Go forward! The path has been cleared long ago by the *Vedas*. Its end is in sight. There is much to be learned along the way, but don't tarry. Keep pushing onward, upward and inward.

LESSON ONE

The River Of Life



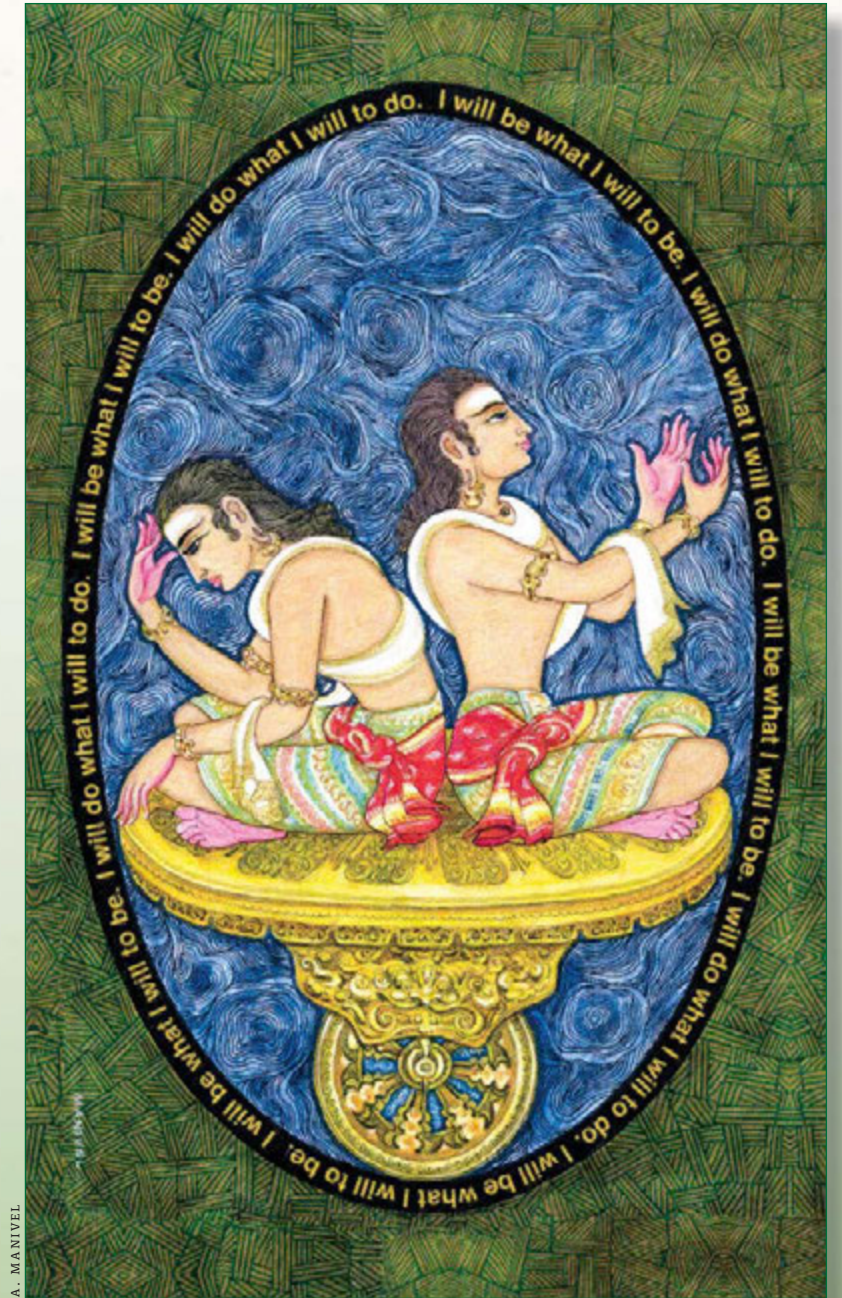
A family floats down the river Ganges in a mythic raft, their faces uplifted in detached trust of the Divine. Behind, two quarreling men are stranded on the banks of the river, unable to progress.

SEEKER: IS THERE A SIMPLE KEY TO understanding life, especially at difficult times? **GURUDEVA:** Yes. Meditate on a river. Follow it as a visual image from its source to the end where it merges into the sea. Realize that you have a river of pure life force flowing through you at this moment. Hold that realization permanently within you. You can now clearly see where you have been clinging to the bank of life's river. Openly observe just how long you have been clinging to various negative attachments by holding awareness in the area of fears, worries, doubts of the future and regrets about the past. To perceive our attachments is the first step we take toward being a detached and independent spiritual being. Through the power of affectionate detachment, we separate awareness from that which it is aware of. We lovingly let go of negative attachments. But being detached does not mean running away from life or being insensitive. When we have the ability to let go, we can at last live in the eternity of the moment. We are warmer, more friendly, more wholesome, more human. **SEEKER:** Why do we become attached? **GURUDEVA:** We become attached because we do not stop to understand that the experiences that conceived the attachment were only a rapid, a waterfall or an old tree trunk blocking one of the little rivulets as it tried to merge with the great stream ever merging into the ocean. Learn to let go of the banks of the river. Let go the past. Let go the future. Let go reaction. Live in the eternity of the moment and say to yourself, "I am the master of my body, my mind and my emotions." Satguru Yogaswami declared: "Let happiness and sorrow come and go like the clouds." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Go to a river or a stream, sit beside it in a quiet place alone and see the water as your own life force. Watch how it flows past all obstacles, accepting every change it meets, as it moves steadily toward its goal. Aum.

SEEKER: WHAT CAN I DO WHEN OLD attitudes fight my spiritual convictions? **GURUDEVA:** When we start on the spiritual path, the past, held in our subconscious mind, is there as a friend or an enemy to our quest. For years we have repeated statements and attached meaning to them in our thoughts and words. This has programmed our subconscious and helped form our life as we know it, for the subconscious brings into manifestation the impressions we put into it. To succeed on the path, we must change the subconscious and remold its magnetic force with new ideas and new concepts. This can be done through the power of affirmation. An affirmation is a positive statement repeated to oneself to create a specific effect in the mind. **SEEKER:** How does one choose the right affirmation? **GURUDEVA:** First we must realize what we do not want. Then we must take steps to change it. For example, if you feel "I can't," you cannot. But you can reverse this pattern and change the flow of magnetic mental force by saying orally and feeling through all the atoms of your body "I can. I will. I am able to accomplish what I plan." Repeat that statement fifty or a hundred times a day. Your subconscious may counter with feelings of "I can't. I won't. I am not able." But you must not give up saying "I can. I will. I am able" until you find the subconscious actually creating situations in which you can and are able to be successful, happy and acquire what you need, be it temporal goods or unfoldment on the inner path. Satguru Yogaswami reminded us, Whatsoever you think, that you become. That is the great secret." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Repeat the affirmation "I'm all right, right now" each time you find yourself worrying about the past or the future. Gently but firmly bring your awareness back to the present and reaffirm the fact that you really are all right, right now. Learn to live in the now. Aum.

LESSON TWO

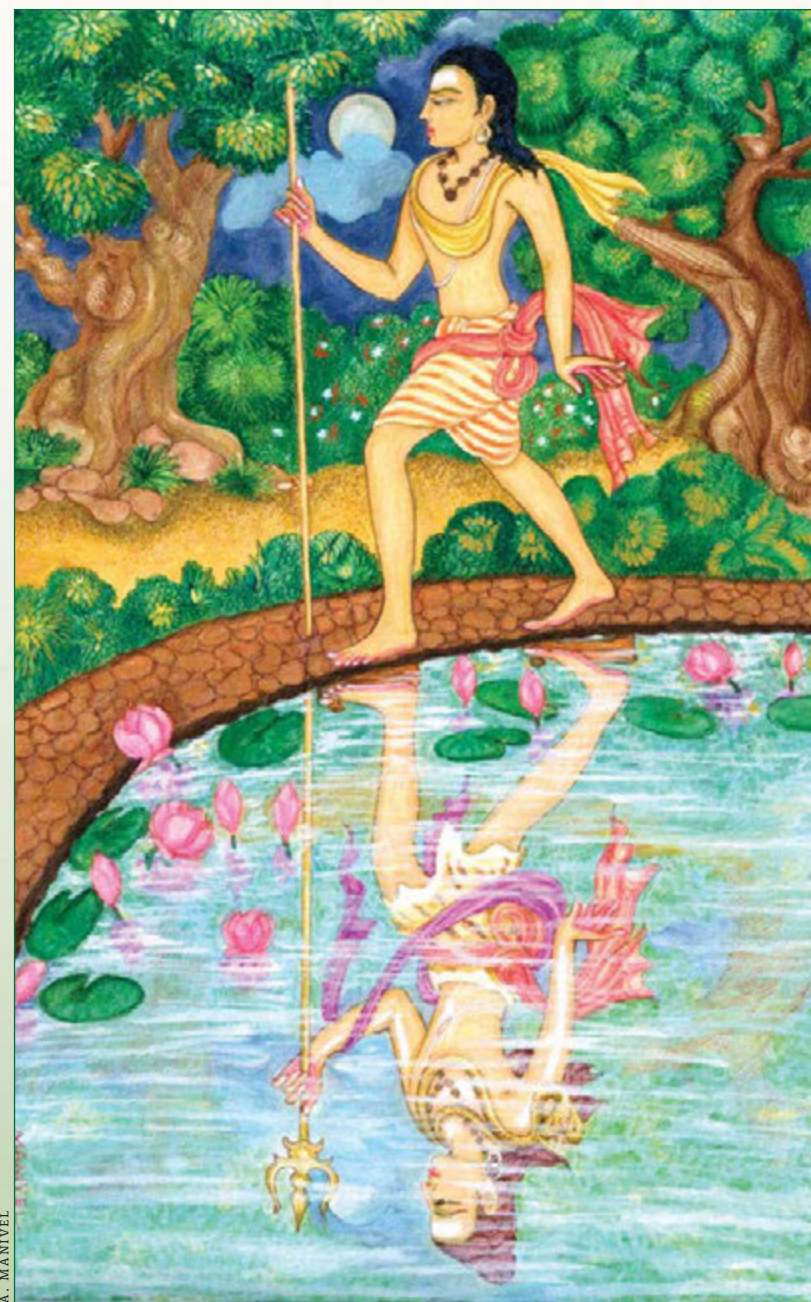
The Power Of Affirmation



A seeker is seated on a fabled one-wheeled chariot, representing his mind's movements. The power to move toward gloom and failure or upliftment and success—lies in his words and thoughts.

LESSON THREE

Five Steps to Enlightenment



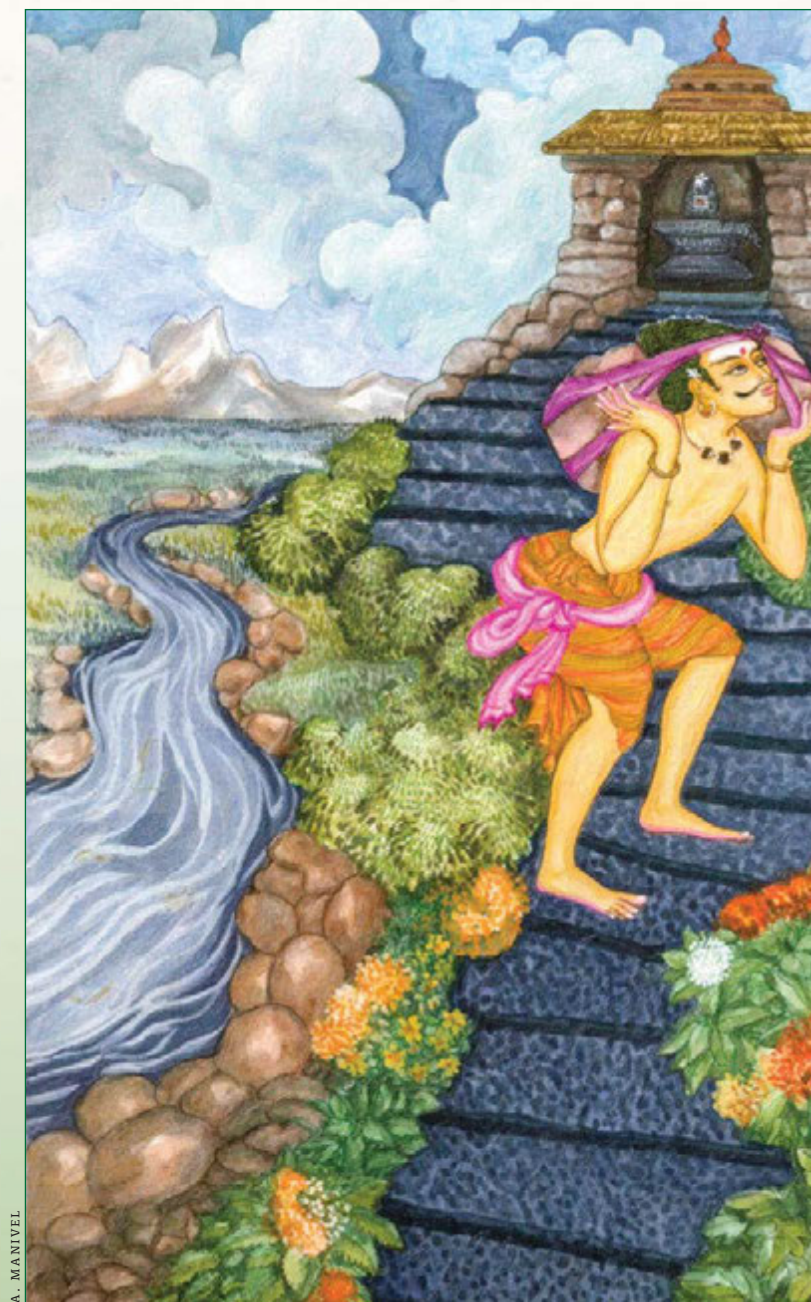
A Sivabhaktar strides boldly along the path, moving toward Self Realization, assured of Siva's loving closeness. All the while, Siva is within him, symbolized by the reflection in the lotus pond.

SEEKER: ARE THERE DEFINITE STEPS ON THE inner path? **GURUDEVA:** Yes, there are five steps on the path of enlightenment. These steps are really regions of consciousness, each more refined than the last. As awareness becomes refined and detached, as it comes under the conscious control of the spiritual will, we are able to penetrate each layer in succession until the final goal is reached. **SEEKER:** What are the five steps? **GURUDEVA:** Attention is the first step. It is the ability to hold awareness steady, centralized in the area that we choose. From this point we evolve naturally into the next step, concentration. The hummingbird poised over the flower begins to concentrate on it, to study it, to muse over it. Through the abilities of concentration, meditation slowly becomes available. In meditation you are seeing the flower as it actually is. New knowledge is flooding through you from the inside, and you are joyously alert and content. From sustained meditation, we enter contemplation. We plunge deeper, deeper, deeper within, beyond the external form into the energy and the life within the cells of the flower. We are absorbed in that energy. We become that energy that pervades every atom of existence. Ultimately, contemplation leads to Self Realization, to the very deepest samadhi, wherein you, in a sense, go within one atom of that pure energy and into the Primal Source of all. There is nothing you can say about it, because there are no areas of the mind in which the Self God exists, and yet, but for the Self the mind would not exist. It is unspeakable Truth, known only by the knower. Satguru Yogaswami put it simply, "First step, second step, third step—and so on, till you come to the top." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Find a quiet place. Put a flower in front of you and concentrate on it. Try to think ten consecutive thoughts about the flower without interruption. Keep trying. Keep trying. Aum.

SEEKER: I HAVE BEEN MEDITATING FOR YEARS, but with little success. Why? **GURUDEVA:** Unfoldment doesn't take a lot of time. It just takes a lot of willpower. Someone with minimal willpower may sit at attention and concentrate and meditate every day for years and years and years and constantly be distracted and constantly be unsuccessful. Another person can be extremely successful in a short period of time because he has willpower. The previous way he lived his life gave a great strength to his will, and he goes soaring within on that power. Will is the fuel which carries awareness through all areas of the mind. It is that spiritual quality which makes all inner goals a reality. The will has to be cultivated, just like you would cultivate a garden. The energies have to all be flowing, in a sense, through one channel, so that everything you do is satisfying, complete, beautiful. **SEEKER:** How can I strengthen my willpower? **GURUDEVA:** The more willpower you use, the more you have to use. It is an unlimited power within you. Finish each job that you begin. Keep each promise that you make. Fulfill each plan that you have set in motion, provided it is true, kind, helpful and fulfills a need. The right thing for you to do may perhaps be the hardest. This, then, is the very thing you should impel yourself to accomplish. Do this and experience your will becoming stronger and every part of your nature responding beautifully. Do a little bit more than you think you are able to do. That also exercises the will. Every time you exercise your will, you strengthen it. Yogaswami told devotees, "Resolve and act. Whatever you do, do it with all your might." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Pick a task that you have left unfinished for a long time and resolve to complete it. Schedule the time, then stick with great determination to your plan and complete the project even better than expected. Aum.

LESSON FOUR

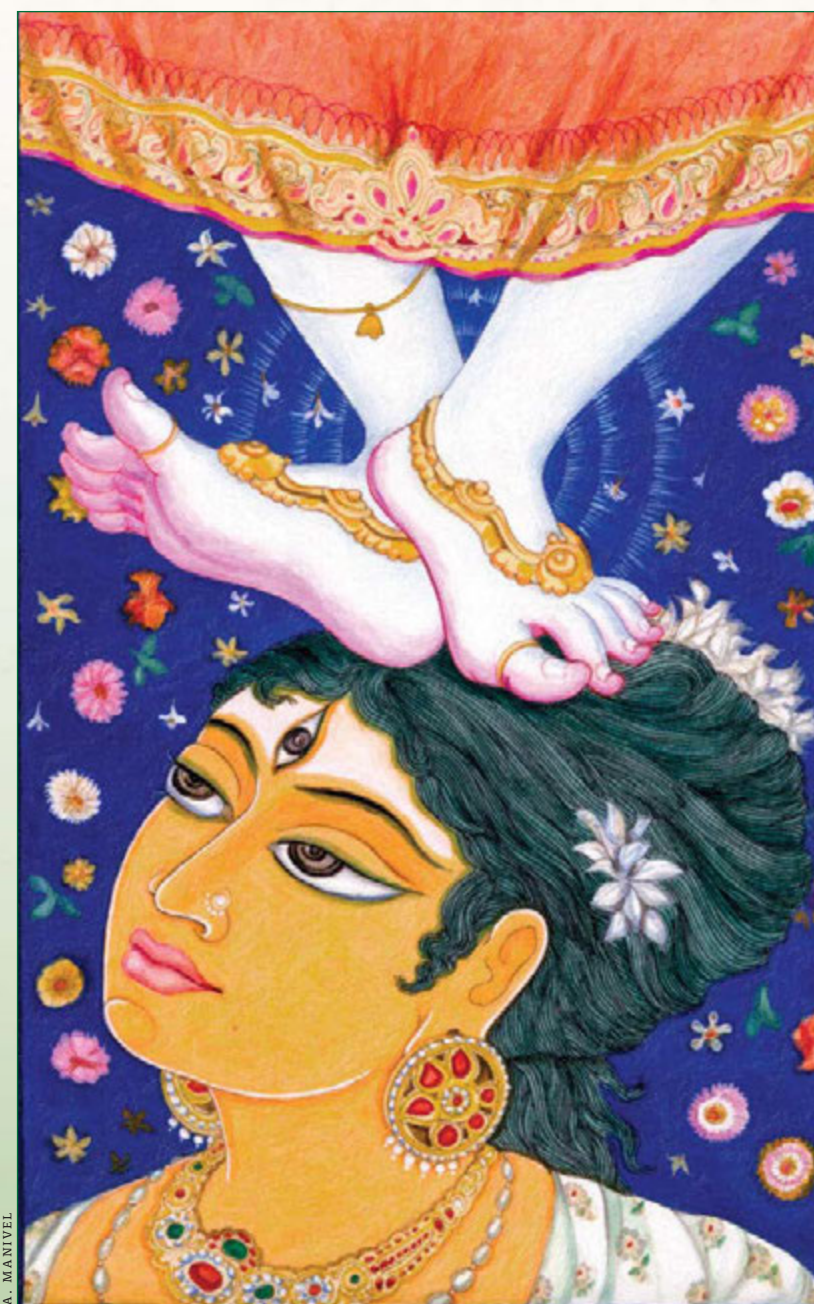
Willpower, the Fuel of Attainment



An indomitable will is required on the spiritual path. Here a man has vowed to build a temple atop a remote hill. Each stone must be carried from the river below. Only his willpower sustains the effort.

LESSON FIVE

Superconscious Mind Of Light



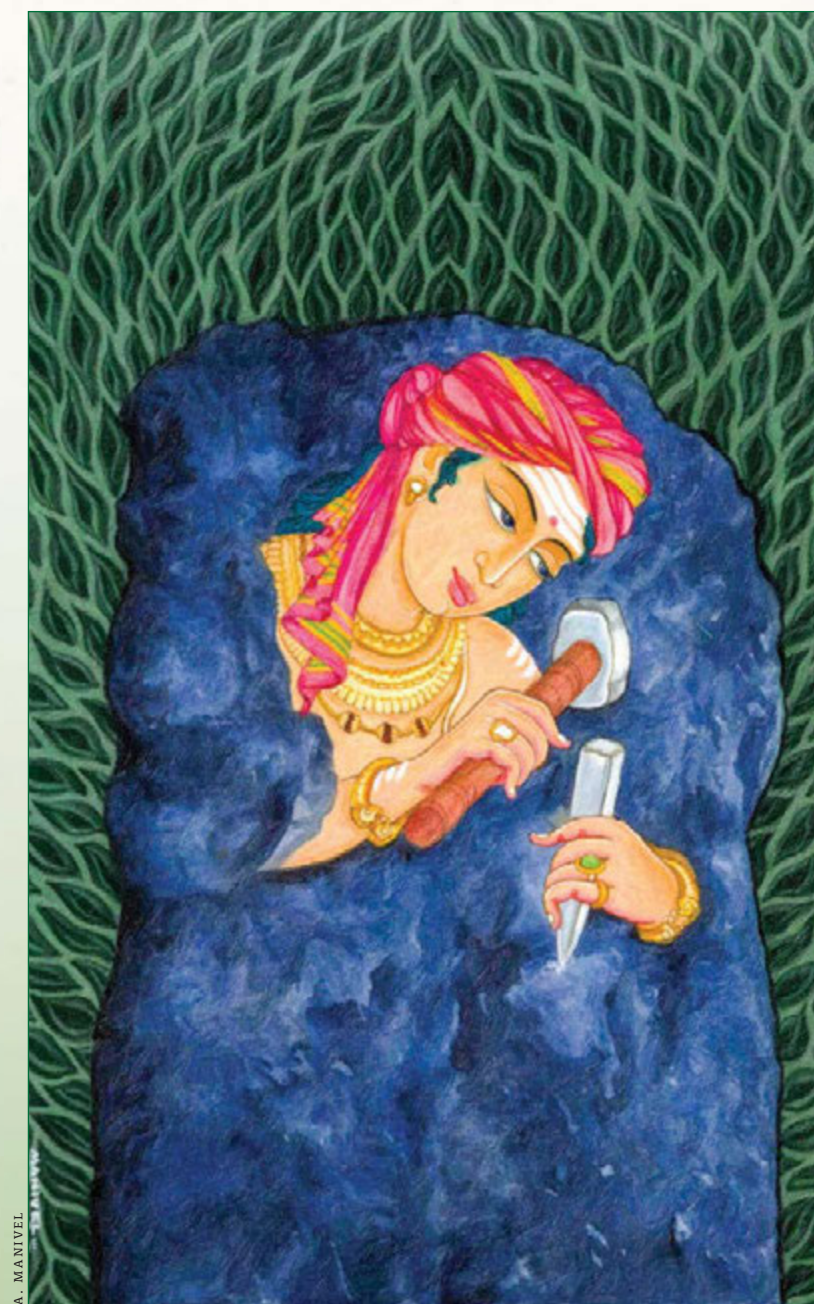
As the superconscious awakens, the seeker's third eye, the ajna chakra, reveals a world of light and sound, inner peace and mystical experience. This woman inwardly sees Siva dancing on her head.

SEEKER: WHAT IS THE SUPERCONSCIOUS mind? **GURUDEVA:** Out of Parasiva, Absolute Reality, ever comes the first manifestation of mind—superconsciousness or infinite knowing. The superconscious mind is the mind of the soul—the mind of God Siva. The superconscious mind is the most wonderful area of the mind that there is, but we're not always aware in the superconscious mind, because we're generally in the subsuperconscious, aware of the conscious mind. Or we are aware of our own subconscious mind or that of another. But the more we detach awareness from subconscious binds, from conscious-mind attachments, the more we become superconscious. The superconscious acts in the now. All superconscious knowing comes to you intuitively, in a flash out of the nowhere. Intuition is more direct than reason and far more accurate. **SEEKER:** How do we know when we are superconscious? **GURUDEVA:** When we feel as if we are living totally in the moment, when we subconsciously identify ourselves as an intense, vibrating entity of the eternal now, that is superconsciousness. Occasionally, in deep meditation we see the head filled with clear white light. That is superconsciousness. When you are superconscious, you may see yourself as pure life force flowing through people, through trees, through everything. When you are in contemplation, so engrossed in the energies within you, you dynamically feel that peace of the central source of all energy. You realize that you are the source of all energy, the center of all consciousness. That, too, is superconsciousness. Satguru Yogaswami explained, "The source of knowledge is mine. The key of existence lies in the palm of my hand." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Sit quietly in meditation. Relax your body, regulate your breathing and seek the light within your head. This light which lights your thoughts is the light of superconsciousness. Aum.

SEEKER: WHAT IS KARMA? **GURUDEVA:** Karma is the law of cause and effect. Every action that we perform in life, every thought that we think, has its reaction. People often ask, "Why is this happening to me? It doesn't seem fair!" Were they able to observe more deeply, they would see all the ingredients that came together out of the past to create the conditions they are passing through in the now. They would observe that every action is like planting a seed. The fruit of that seed, harvested perhaps years or lifetimes later, is reaction. We face those reactions through other people and through our own actions. We throw a boomerang. It travels out into the air, turns around and comes back to us with equal force. In a similar way, our actions and thoughts, be they loving or hateful, set up patterns of reaction that return to us with equal force. **SEEKER:** How should we face our karma? **GURUDEVA:** By applying the wisdom of the sages to the experiences encountered in life, we resolve our karma rather than create new karma. By gaining conscious control of thoughts and attitudes, by right action, we can control the flow of karma. Then we stop creating uncomplimentary karma and can consciously face the reactions of the past without the confusion of additional day-to-day reactions. Face each challenge by telling yourself, "This is the karma I was born to face. I came here to spiritually unfold, to face and accept the karmas of this and all my past lives." Life is the classroom. Karma is the teacher. Yogaswami summarized, "The present is the result of past action. Man is the architect of his future." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Today, each time you find yourself mentally blaming others, stop. Let go of all feelings of resentment, helplessness and injustice. Act on this knowledge: all that comes to you, good and bad alike, is self-created and contains a lesson to be learned. Learn the lesson and be free. Aum.

LESSON SIX

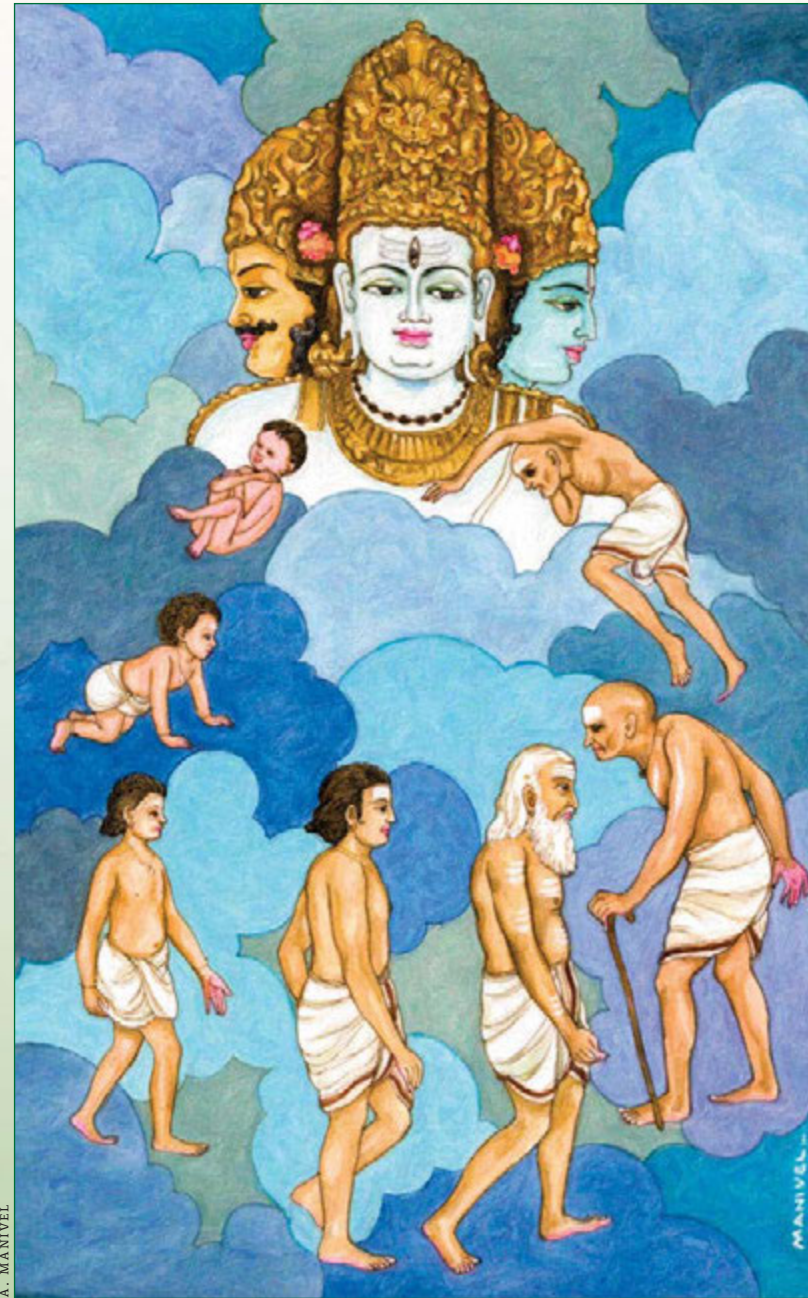
Karma: Rules of the Game



Each soul is responsible for his own karma, a concept symbolized here by a sculptor's carving himself out of a granite stone, just as we create experiences through our thoughts, words and deeds.

LESSON SEVEN

Reincarnation: Ocean of Lives



Here Siva, as Trimurti, guides the reincarnation process as a soul is embodied, grows to manhood, then declines into old age and death, to be reborn again to experience the world and evolve.

SEEKER: WHAT IS REINCARNATION?

GURUDEVA: Reincarnation is the natural cycle of birth, death and rebirth. We are not the body in which we live, but the immortal soul which inhabits one body after another on the Earth during its evolutionary journey. Like the caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly, physical death is a most natural transition for the soul, never to be feared. The belief in reincarnation brings a great sense of peace. Knowing that the soul evolves from life to life gives a remarkable insight into the human condition and appreciation for all men in all stages of spiritual development. **SEEKER:** What happens when we die? **GURUDEVA:** We simply step out of the physical body and we're in our astral body, and we carry on as usual in various refined force fields according to where we are in the mind at the time of death. There we see people who have also "died" and others who have left their physical body while sleeping. On the astral plane we relive many experiences of our earthly life, creating for ourself heavens or hells. When our lessons have been learned and our reactions resolved, we slough off the astral body, then enter a new physical body. The conditions we reincarnate in depend on how we have conducted ourself through our many lives and what we were thinking about when we died. The actions and reactions we set in motion in our last life form the tendencies in the next. Reincarnation ceases when all karmas have been resolved, dharma has been well performed and God fully realized. This is known as moksha, or liberation from rebirth. Yogaswami lamented, "Oh, the endless anxieties of endless births! When will these delusions end?" **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Observe in one day: a pregnant woman, a newborn infant, children at school, a wedding, an elderly person and a cemetery. Encompass the complete cycle the soul passes through, life after life. Aum.

SEEKER: WHAT ARE THE CHAKRAS?

GURUDEVA: The chakras are great force centers or nerve ganglia in the physical body, the astral body and the body of the soul. When inwardly perceived, they are vividly colorful and can be heard. Chakra is a Sanskrit word meaning "wheel," as these are spinning circles of energy and regions of mind power. The muladhara, the foundation or "root center" at the base of the spine, governs memory. Above it are six chakras which control reason, willpower, cognition, divine love, divine sight and illumination, respectively. Below the muladhara are seven lower chakras, realms of the instinctive, animal nature, making fourteen major chakras in all. **SEEKER:** Are the chakras connected one to another? **GURUDEVA:** The chakras are interconnected by three major psychic nerve currents or nadis through which flow all forces of life and mind. The ida nadi is passive-feminine; the pingala nadi is aggressive-masculine. Directly through the spinal cord runs the sushumna nadi like a shaft of pure energy. When ida and pingala are balanced, the chakras all spin at the same velocity, and awareness is released to soar within. This is accomplished through hatha yoga, controlled breathing and meditation. Finally, through sustained states of intense contemplation, the cosmic energy within sushumna, the kundalini or "serpent power," which is at this time playing up and down the spine like a thermometer, rises to the 1,008-petaled chakra at the top of the head, and we go beyond consciousness and become the Self, in total Self Realization. Yogaswami prayed, "O, cave-dwelling shakti, universal energy lying coiled and dormant within me, arise!" **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Study the people around you. Try to intuit who is functioning primarily in the higher chakras of love and understanding and who is functioning in the lower, instinctive animal nature. Aum.

LESSON EIGHT

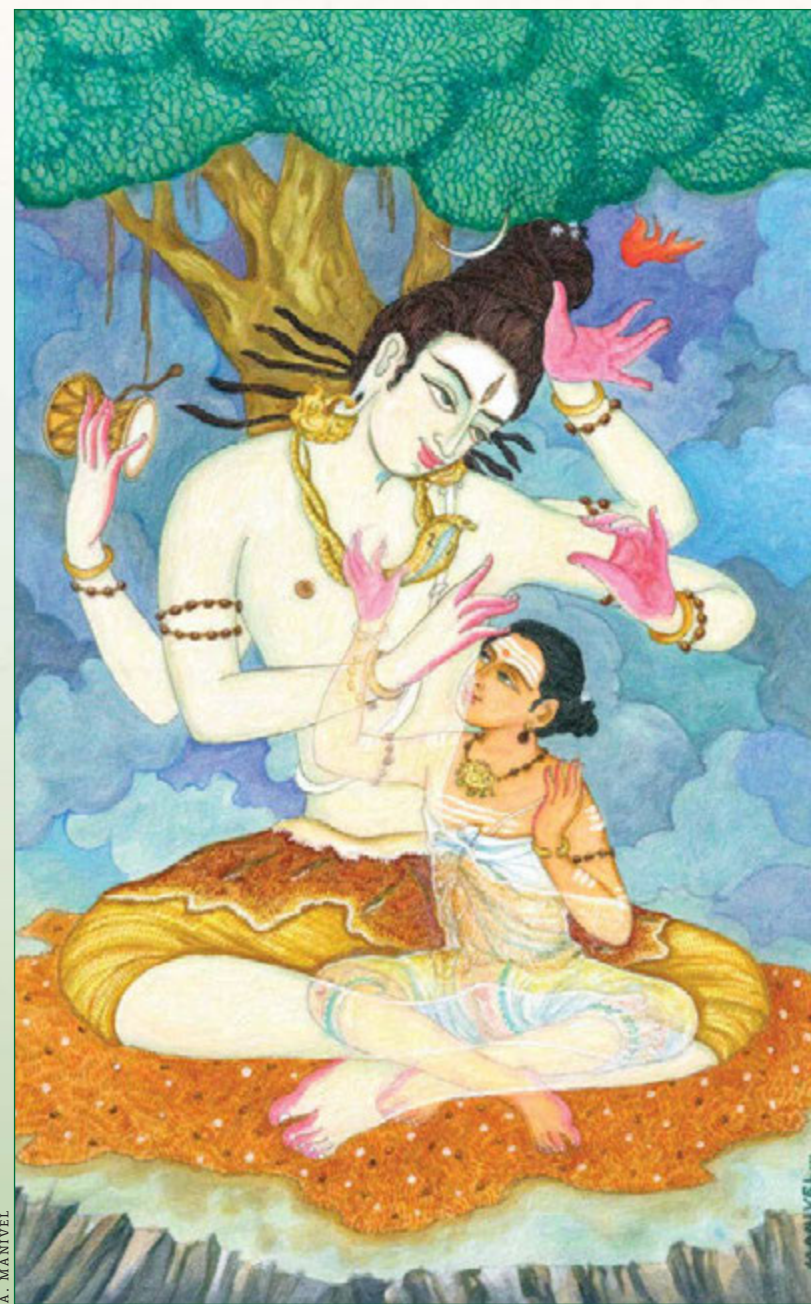
Chakras, Centers Of Consciousness



Seven instinctive chakras are depicted here in the legs and feet, seven central chakras, and seven subtle chakras above the head. Their realms of consciousness are shown as shaded bands.

LESSON NINE

Our Great God Siva



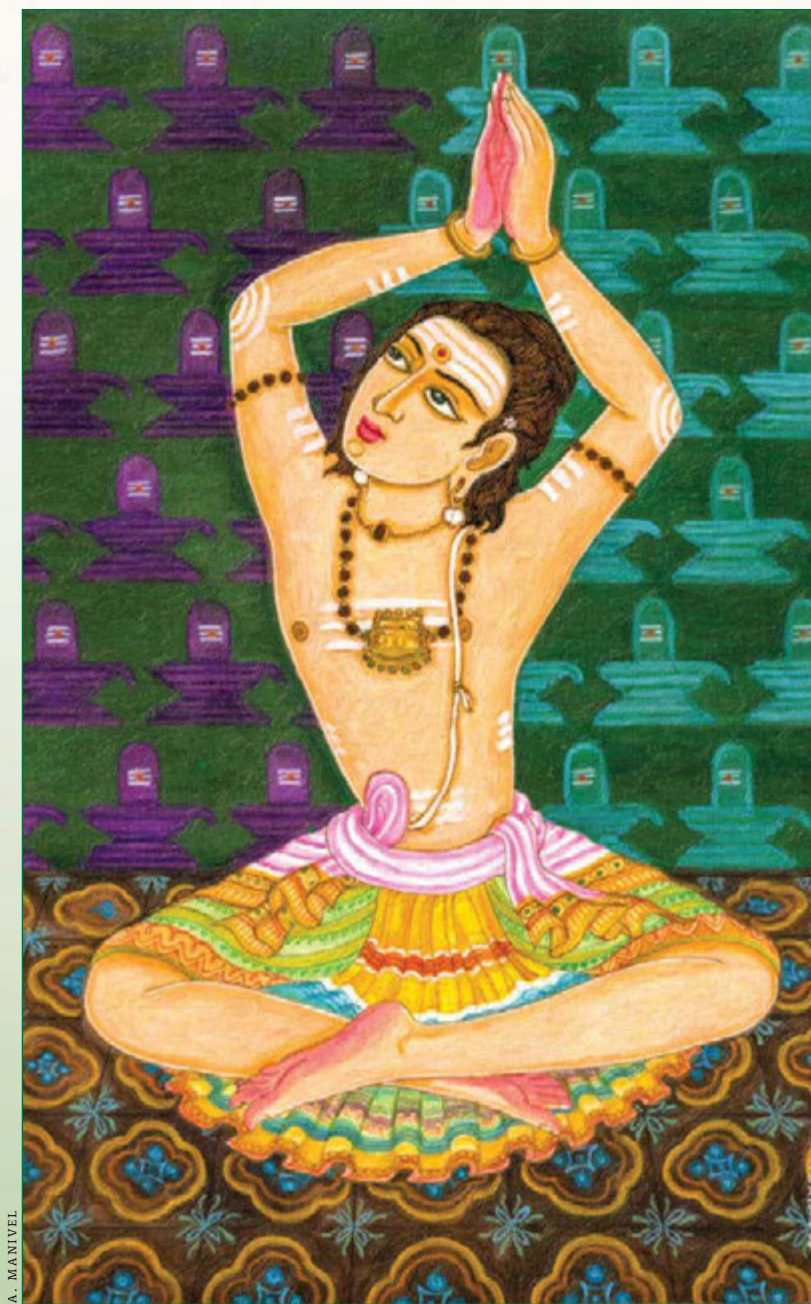
Every soul's ultimate goal, in this life or another, is to realize its oneness with God. That union is depicted here as Lord Siva and a jnani meet and merge beneath a banyan tree.

SEEKER: WHO IS LORD SIVA? **GURUDEVA:** Lord Siva is God, the uncreated Supreme Being. My satguru, Sage Yogaswami, proclaimed: "The Universal One is Siva. That without place or name is Siva. The splendor known as Aum is Siva. That which has no form is Siva. That which is the Truth is Siva." Lord Siva, God, was never created. He has existed forever and has created all things, including everybody's individual soul. God Siva is a one Being, yet we understand Him in three perfections. Parasiva, Absolute Reality, timeless, formless, spaceless, is His unmanifest first perfection. His second perfection, Pure Consciousness, or Parashakti, is all-pervasive, infinite, and is found in every action and particle of His creation. His third perfection, Primal Soul, Parameshvara, is our personal Lord and Ruler of all three worlds. It is comforting to know that Lord Siva is the Divine Father/Mother. That close to us, that watchful and that loving is our great God Siva. **SEEKER:** Does God pervade everything? **GURUDEVA:** Infinite is Siva's all-pervasive, superconscious, exalted mind. His Being is within every animate and inanimate form—simultaneously, all at once, in every inner and outer universe. This unbounded Satchidananda has neither beginning nor end. All is within it. It is within all. Satguru Yogaswami proclaimed: "You will know Siva if you remain still. God is Love. God is Truth. God is all things. God is everywhere. The whole world depends on an unknowable energy for all its activities. It is all the same whether this energy is called God or given any other name." Yogaswami intoned, "Everywhere, all the time and in everyone you can hear the voice of God." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Try to find one place where God Siva is not. Search everywhere, in all seriousness, throughout your home and outside as well. In the process, see if you can prove to yourself that God Siva is All and in all. Aum.

SEEKER: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF OUR SOUL? **GURUDEVA:** Our individual soul is the immortal and spiritual body of light that animates life and reincarnates again and again until all necessary karmas are created and resolved and its essential unity with God is realized. Our individual soul is the creation of God Siva and the source of all our higher functions, including knowledge, will and love. Our soul is neither male nor female. It is that which never dies, even when the four outer sheaths or bodies—physical, pranic, instinctive and mental—change form and perish, as they naturally do. The soul body is our innermost form. We are not the physical body, mind or emotions. We are the immortal soul. **SEEKER:** Does the soul actually grow and mature? **GURUDEVA:** For the sake of understanding the mysteries of the soul, we distinguish between the soul body and its essence. As a soul body, we are individual and unique, different from all others. At the core of our subtle soul body is Satchidananda, or immanent Love; and at the core of that is Parasiva, or transcendent Reality. These are the nucleus of the soul, which does not change or evolve. They are eternally perfect and one with God Siva. We may liken the soul body to an acorn, which contains the mighty oak tree but is a small seed yet to develop. The soul body matures through experience, evolving through many lives into the splendor of God Siva ultimately realizing Him totally. Even when God Realization is attained, the soul body continues to evolve in this and other worlds until it merges with the Primal Soul as a drop of water merges with its source, the ocean. My guru affirmed, "It will not be an overstatement if I say that man is God." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Perform this simple exercise. Lift your arm, then lower it again. Ponder, "Is not the energy within my arm the same energy of Siva within all living things?" Aum.

LESSON TEN

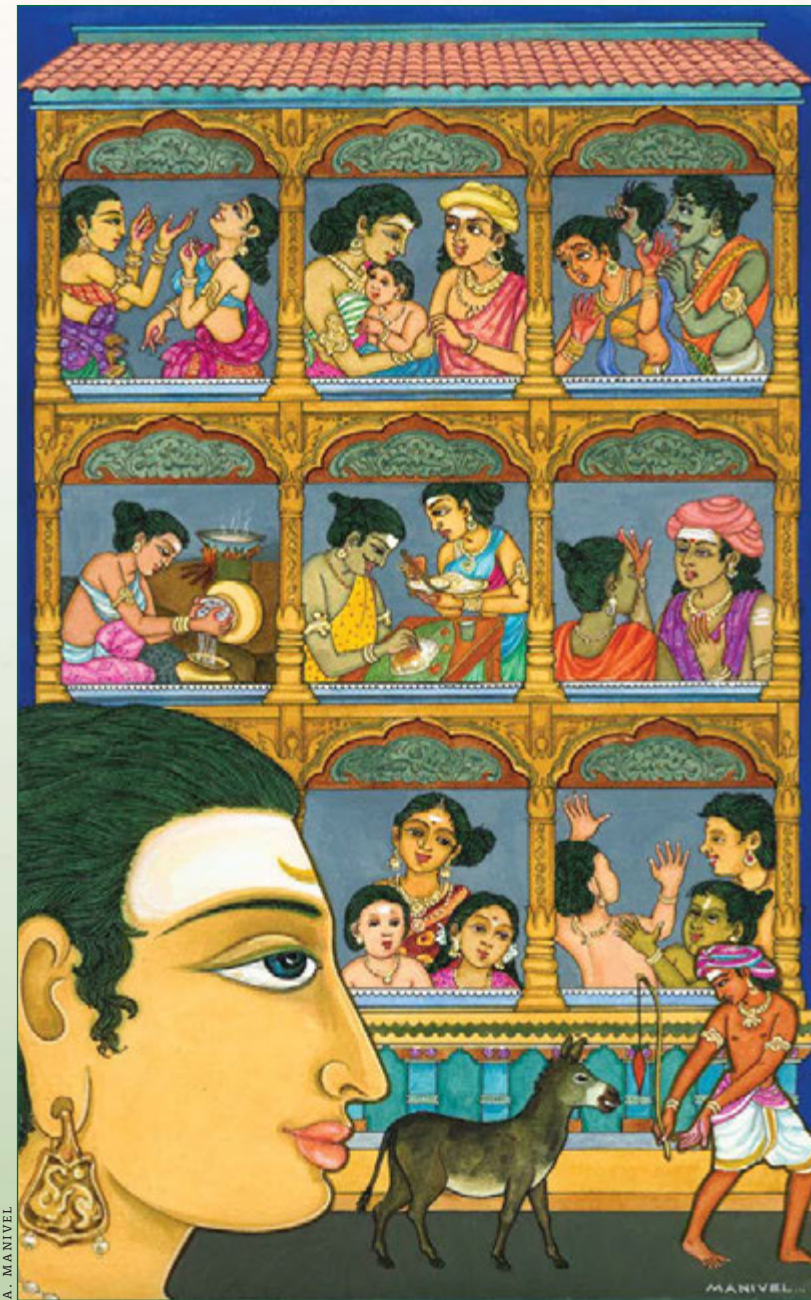
Our Pristine, Immortal Soul



This awakened soul, hands lifted in worshipful awareness, contemplates the formless Parasiva (the purple Sivalingas) and Siva in form as Maheshvara and Satchidananda (the blue Lingas).

LESSON ELEVEN

The World We Live in



A woman reflects on the world she lives in, a life filled with family, meals, gatherings, duties, conversations, sorrows, celebrations, discoveries, responsibilities and varied relationships.

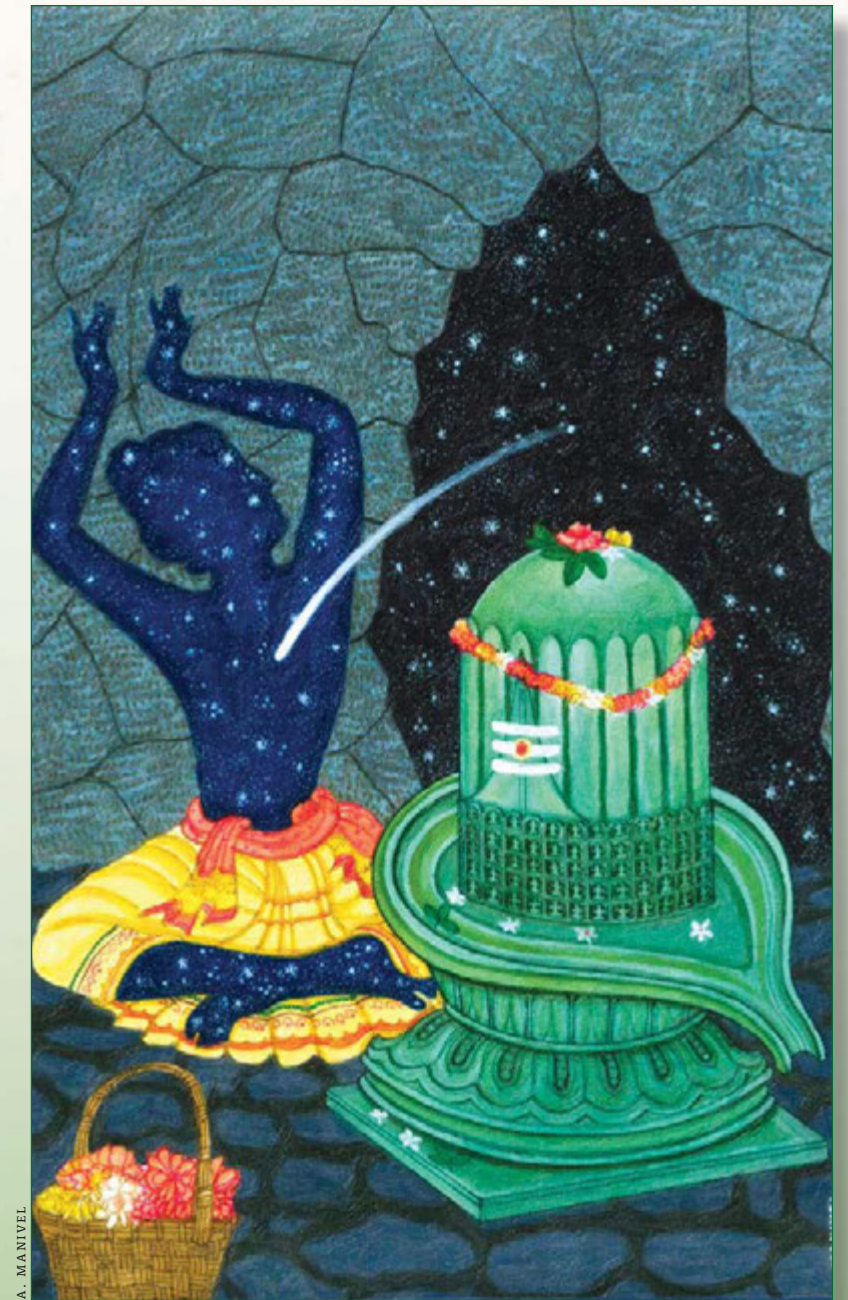
SEEKER: WHERE DID THIS WORLD COME from? Is it real? **GURUDEVA:** Lord Siva created this and numberless other worlds of relative reality for souls to inhabit as they evolve. This world, and indeed all of existence, is maya, the principle of matter. While God is absolutely real, His emanated world is relatively real. That does not mean that the universe is illusory or nonexistent, but that it is impermanent and subject to change. It is an error to say that the universe is mere illusion, for it is entirely real when experienced in ordinary consciousness, and its existence is required to lead us to God. Therefore, we call it relatively real to distinguish it from the unchanging Reality. **SEEKER:** Why is there so much suffering and misery in the world? **GURUDEVA:** The nature of the world is duality. It contains each thing and its opposite: joy and sorrow, goodness and evil, love and hate. Through experience of these, we learn and evolve, finally seeking Truth which transcends all opposites. The world is the place where our destiny is shaped, our desires fulfilled and our soul matured. In the world we grow from ignorance into wisdom, from darkness into light and from a consciousness of death to immortality. My satguru said, "The whole world is an ashrama in which all are doing sadhana." We must love the world, which is God's creation. The world is a glorious place, not to be feared. It is a gracious gift from Siva Himself, a playground for His children in which to interrelate young souls with the old—the young experiencing their karma while the old hold firmly to their dharma. The young grow; the old know. Yogaswami explained, "The world is a training college. Some are in kindergarten. Some are in the B.A. class." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Observe a youth playing, a mother teaching her child, a worker at his task. Strive to see the world as a classroom of experience, an "ashrama in which all are doing sadhana." Aum.

SEEKER: WHAT IS LIFE'S ULTIMATE GOAL?

GURUDEVA: The goal is to realize God Siva in His absolute or transcendent state, which when realized is your own ultimate state—timeless, formless, spaceless Truth. That Truth lies beyond the thinking mind, beyond the feeling nature, beyond action or any movement of the mind. Being, seeing this Truth then gives the correct perspective, brings the external realities into perspective. They then are seen as truly unrealities, yet not discarded as such. This intimate experience must be experienced while in the physical body. One comes back and back again into flesh simply to realize Parasiva. Nothing more. Yet, the Self, or Parasiva, is an experience only after it has been experienced. Yet, it is not an experience at all, but the only possible nonexperience, which registers in its aftermath upon the mind of man. **SEEKER:** What is the path to the Self? **GURUDEVA:** In each birth we must fulfill more goals leading to the one ultimate goal which after many births well lived will loom before us as the only goal worthy of striving for in this lifetime. We know the Self, which is God and which is ourself, only when we enter the guha, the cave within, as a way of life, not just a temporary, experimental, psychological trial. We know the Self within ourself only when we fully turn into ourselves through concentration, meditation and contemplation, and then sustain the resulting samadhi of Satchidananda in hopes of finding—determined to find—That which cannot be described, That which was spoken about by the great rishis, Parasiva, beyond a stilled mind. My satguru proclaimed, "When the mind and the soul become one with God, it is samadhi." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Sit and visualize above you nothing, below you nothing and all around you nothing, and try to dissolve yourself into that nothingness. Thus deepen your understanding of the Self. Aum.

LESSON TWELVE

Self Realization: Life's Ultimate Goal



In a mountain cave a yogi, after meditating and worshipping, transcends his mind, realizes the Self God and, elated, holds both hands high knowing he is one with Siva's perfect universe.

LESSON THIRTEEN

Satguru: the Spiritual Guide



Life's highest grace is to see, to know, to hear and to commune with a living satguru. A devotee falls at his guru's feet, prayerful that training, protection and perhaps initiation may come.

SEEKER: WHAT IS A SATGURU? **GURUDEVA:**

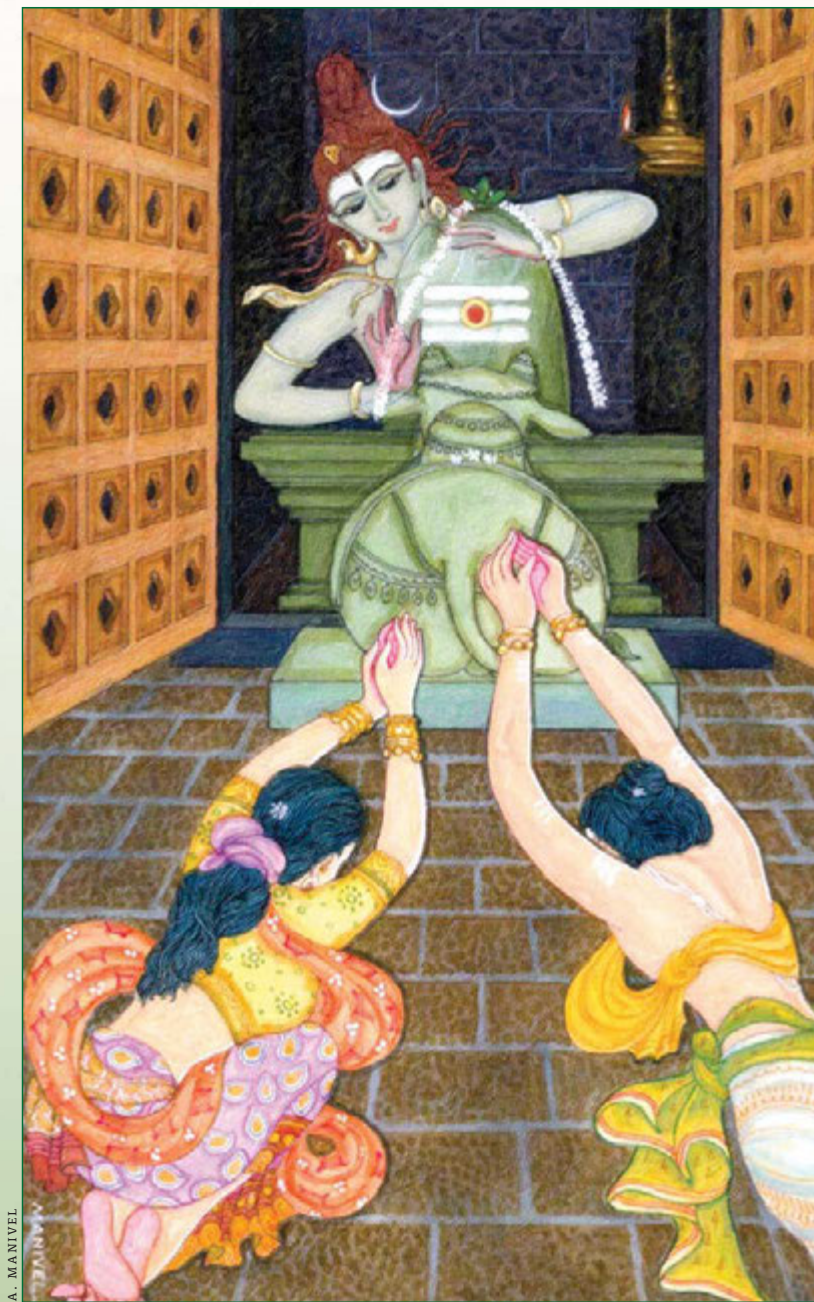
There are many kinds of gurus, who are Lord Siva's instruments in lifting the veils of ignorance to where knowledge exists in its pristine purity—gurus of music, gurus of art, gurus of dance, gurus of philosophy, but most important is the satguru, the yoga guru, the siddha guru of enlightenment. A satguru is a fully matured and realized soul who actively helps us in our religious life and personal unfoldment. Not all gurus are satgurus. The satguru is the jnani, the enlightened being who sees beyond duality and knows the oneness of all. He is the illumined one, filled with light, filled with love. He sees God everywhere, in all men. He is the one who simply is and who sees no differences. That is his difference. **SEEKER:** Does one really need a guru? **GURUDEVA:** With rare exceptions, a guru is necessary to guide the aspirant on the path as far as he is willing and able to go in his current incarnation. The guru is needed because the mind is cunning and the ego is a self-perpetuating mechanism. It is unable and unwilling to transcend itself by itself. Therefore, one needs the guidance of another who has gone through the same process, who has faithfully followed the path to its natural end and therefore can gently lead us to God within ourselves. It is the satguru's job to inspire, to assist, to guide and sometimes even impel the disciple to move a little further toward the Self of himself than he has been able to go by himself. Remember, the satguru will keep you on the path, but you have to walk the path yourself. Satguru Yogaswami taught, "The company of great souls is necessary. Love of the satguru is most praiseworthy." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Seek out and have the darshana, "holy sight," of a special person who lives a sacred life. Afterwards stop and carefully explore the affect that his or her presence had on your mind and awareness. Aum.

SEEKER: WHAT IS BHAKTI YOGA?

BODHINATHA: Bhakti yoga is the yoga of devotion. It is the practice of external worship which begins by attending pujas, ceremonial worship, at the temple and later develops into conducting simple rituals in one's own home shrine. The goal of bhakti yoga is to awaken a deep devotion, a heartfelt love of God that transforms our nature, giving us a softened, mellow heart. A devotee well established in the practice of bhakti yoga profoundly enjoys going to the temple and absorbing the purifying and uplifting blessings that come from the Deity during the puja. **SEEKER:** How does bhakti yoga relate to meditation? **BODHINATHA:** Based on his many years of teaching experience, Gurudeva came to the conclusion that it is a waste of the guru's time to give training in meditation before devotion has been awakened through bhakti yoga. Gurudeva found, time and again, that the attainments achieved in meditation were not sustained except where a foundation of devotion had first been established. One of the reasons is that meditation makes us more aware of our subconscious mind, including any unresolved problems with our family and our own personal ego. Becoming aware of such matters can be quite disturbing. If we are strong in our bhakti yoga, then the blessings we feel when we go to the temple uplift and console us during these challenging times. If we are not, then facing these problems can be very difficult and cause us to give up regular meditation altogether. Yogaswami enjoined, "Cherish the Lord in the recesses of your heart. Everything everywhere is subject to His Will." **TODAY'S CHALLENGE:** Gather eleven flowers in a basket or bowl. Select a picture or statue of Lord Ganesha that inspires you. Offer the flowers one at a time to the image while chanting the mantra "Aum Sri Ganeshaya Namah." Visualize Him blessing you, and feel your devotion flooding out to Him. Aum.

LESSON FOURTEEN

Bhakti: the Yoga of Devotion



A man and wife prostrate before God Siva. This devotional salutation subdues the ego, strengthens humility and opens the doors of rapport between the worshiper and the worshipful.



K E R A L A

Facing and Fixing a Shortage of Priests

With many brahmin boys taking up other professions, temple-owning organizations have created schools to train anyone aspiring to the religious life

BY G.K. NAIR, KERALA

DUE TO AN EVER-INCREASING SCARCITY of temple priests from the brahmin community in the southern Indian state of Kerala, several non-brahmin communities have set up their own priest training programs—a radical change in tradition. Graduates are hired for service in the temples owned and administered by their community.

The latest such school was established by the Nair Service Society (NSS), which represents the four-million-strong Nair community and owns over 1,000 temples across Kerala. The society started its Sri Padmanabha NSS Thantra Vidhyapeedom in 2010

with a full-time, two-year course of study comprising 18 months of classes and a six-month internship at a temple. The syllabus covers temple worship, havana, yoga, vastu architecture, astrology and Hindu philosophy.

Candidates must be vegetarian and have completed their secondary education. Their horoscope, character and family background are examined closely. As Arun Bhaskar, the school's director, says, "It is a profession that demands spirituality, piousness and good character." Following the traditional system, students are provided free tuition, room and board during their studies. They receive a certificate at the completion of their training. The first batch graduated last year, and

Bhaskar reports that all have been employed as priests at NSS temples.

The NSS general secretary, Mr. G. Sukumaran Nair, confides that the school faced stiff opposition from the upper-caste priest community, who still consider the priesthood their monopoly—despite that many of their present generation are going into other professions. He asserts that their priests had become greedy, only wanting to work at certain rich temples and not at the small ones, which are over 90 percent of the total. "We have been experiencing an acute shortage of qualified priests for a long time," Nair explained. "Finally we decided to open our own school. Better to be late than never."

Adopting the vocation: Students of the Thantravidhya Gurukulam at Paravur, under the leadership of Rakesh Thantri (second from left); new priests (above right) from the Nair Service Society's Sri Padmanabha

The move has been welcomed by the non-brahmin Ezhava community. A full century ago, they opened the Brahavidhya Gurukulam at Sivagiri under the guidance of Sree Narayana Guru. A second school, Thantra Vidhya Gurukulam, was opened several decades ago in Konothukunnu. It has enjoyed a recent increase in popularity under the leadership of Dr. Karumathra Vijayan Thantri, a respected Sanskrit scholar, expert in temple rituals and head priest for 400 temples. The students are trained under Sri Vidhya Upasana Sampradaya. Graduates of the two schools serve in temples owned by their community of nine million.

Dr. Vijayan told HINDUISM TODAY that the courses are conducted on weekends so that students can attend college during the



week. Over the five-year course, they are taught Sanskrit, rituals, histories of their gurus and enough about Hindu religion to give discourses. Upon completion, each is given a certificate which qualifies him to function as head priest of any temple performing worship of any Deity. Dr. Vijayan reports that under his tenure, "one hundred students have graduated and are now well employed in temples."

Objections from Kerala's brahmin community, which includes the Namboothiri, Namboothiripad, Embranthiri and other subcastes, generated a series of court cases. A Supreme Court decision in 2002 established the right of non-brahmins to be appointed as temple priests in community-owned temples of the Nairs and Ezhavas as well as those run by the state's government-controlled Dewaswom boards.

The priest shortage exists because the present generation of brahmins are not attracted to their traditional profession, for a variety of reasons. The youth complain about the demanding routines, such as waking up early to bathe and spending long hours each day in the temple. Nor do they want to live on the temple premises, a requirement for the head priest at some temples—e.g., one year at Sabarimala and three years at Ettumanoor Mahadeva Temple.

Most importantly, Hindu priests do not enjoy a respectable status in Kerala society, explained Brahmasri Rajiveru, chief priest at the famous Sabarimala hill temple. And the pay is low—actually among the lowest for any temple employee. Board authorities argue that the wages are fair because the priests receive dakshina (gifts of money) from devotees for performing the various rites. "In fact," Rajiveru counters, "for want of funds, the majority of the 2,500 temples under the Dewaswom Boards do not conduct all of the daily pujas; few devotees attend the small temples, and not everyone gives dak-

shina. A priest cannot maintain a family on such meager salary."

The brahmin community is painfully aware of the problem. "This kind of priest family life is not liked by the girls in our community. These days girls are generally well educated and well employed. Therefore, finding a bride for a priest becomes very difficult," admitted Mr. Sankaranarayanan Namboothiri, a brahmin who works at a major bank. His daughter is married to a Chennai-based businessman from his community, while his son is employed with an international airline as a cabin crew member. Kerala's brahmin community is small in numbers; and with marriages only permitted within the respective subcastes, choices are limited. No youth wishes to restrict his options further by pursuing a profession that earns neither respect nor a decent salary.

Finally, in the state's modern Westernized society many brahmin youth consider the priesthood as something primitive. They want to live like their counterparts in other castes and religions. In contrast, the Ezhava and Nair boys come from economically depressed communities. The religiously inclined among them look upon priest work as a good opportunity.

An earlier attempt, in 1969, to train Nair and Ezhava youth for the priesthood by the Travancore Devaswom Board was not successful. M. R. Jaganmohan Das, a former Assistant Commissioner of the Board, told HINDUISM TODAY that devotees refused to even receive the temple sacraments from these priests. Consequently, many were withdrawn and posted in the Board's offices as clerks.

Jaganmohan observes that the sentiments of devotees have changed since that time. Now, he predicts, the success of promoting priests from other castes will largely depend on the devotion and commitment to this pious and spiritual life shown by each individual who adopts this vocation.



INDONESIA

Summit Convenes in Hindu Bali

Leaders from 21 countries joined their Balinese counterparts to cope effectively with the knotty problems facing Hindus around the world

REPORTED BY RAJIV MALIK FROM BALI
AT THE WORLD HINDU SUMMIT II, held in Bali from June 13 to 17, 2013, foreign delegates convened with hundreds more from the island itself to ratify the founding of two institutions: the World Hindu Parisad and the World Hindu Centre. Both entities were foreseen in the Bali Charter adopted at the World Hindu Summit I, held here in 2012. The Parisad is tasked with reinforcing Hinduism worldwide, unifying Hindu communities across the globe and working with governments to help overcome challenges faced by Hindus, both today and in the future. It will be headquartered at the World Hindu Centre, which will be built on land provided by the Balinese government.

Over one thousand participants attended the Summit opening at the Samuan Tiga Temple. The event was graced by Indonesia's Minister of Religion, Surya Dharma Ali, and other local officials. The opening ceremonies included Balinese music, dance and drama. Since the Summit had been scheduled at the commencement of the month-long Bali Arts Festival, quality entertainment and food were more than abundant. In fact, the foreign delegates were overwhelmed with tradition-

al Balinese hospitality from the moment they arrived at this island paradise.

June 14 was a working session to outline the functions of the new organizations and receive advice from prominent Hindu religious leaders. Swami Vigyanand of the VHP spoke first, addressing the specter of conversion facing Hindu society in every nation. He warned against complacency in the face of this existential threat.

Swami Paramatmananda of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha of India expanded on the same issue, pointing out that the proselytizing religions have adopted modern methods. Here in Bali, he said, Muslim businessmen have mostly taken over the local economy, weakening the position of Hindus. He observed that other religions are well organized, but Hindus tend to work individually—therefore, the kind of organization proposed at the conference is clearly needed. He later told HINDUISM TODAY's reporter, "Hindus have to make themselves strong first in Bali and then slowly proceed towards taking on the problems of the world."

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, participating by video, said, "Among the religious faiths, the philosophy of Hinduism is one of the richest, broadest and most progressive. It has to be

brought forth in its truest essence."

At day's end, a formal declaration establishing the World Hindu Parisad and the World Hindu Centre was ratified by the delegates. Ida Pedanda Gede Ketut Sebali Tianyar Arimbawa was selected as president of the World Hindu Parisad, and Prof. I Made Bakta was appointed its secretary general. They are now tasked with creating the structure of the organization and enlisting capable persons to manage the affairs (visit worldhindu-parisad.org).

The third and fourth days were devoted to addressing specific topics. Speakers included Major General Kulwant Singh on ending war, B. Gupta of India on challenges facing global Hinduism, and John Hagelin of Maharishi University in the US on Vedic science. Several presentations were made on women's issues. Sivanandini Duraiswamy of Sri Lanka spoke on her work with women through the Hindu Council of Sri Lanka to recover from the decades-long civil war.

The event concluded with a grand dinner at which the Governor of Bali, Made Mangku Pastika, expressed his support for the nascent organizations. He shared that Bali has a strategic role to play in steering the direction of Hinduism in the decades ahead.

COURTESY WORLD HINDU PARISAD



Bali lays out the red carpet: (clockwise from opposite page) Puja is performed as the delegates stand in the conference hall; blessings for the conference are sought at Gowa Lawah Temple; Swami Parmatmananda Saraswati, General Secretary, Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha; (center) this delegate is likely a member of the Royal Family in Center Java; Dr. Swami Muktananda Puri of Rajasthan (left) shares a laugh with Mahamandaleshwar Priyabrat Brahmachari Mahatirth of Bangladesh; one of the elegant vegetarian meals provided; a traditional Balinese gamelan orchestra at the opening ceremonies; Rishi Vidhyadhar of The Art of Living is greeted in the opening ceremonies

RAJIV MALIK



RAJIV MALIK



RAJIV MALIK



RAJIV MALIK



RAJIV MALIK



COURTESY WORLD HINDU PARISAD



Grasping Palliative Care

How one Canadian doctor is applying the ancient Hindu approach to end-of-life care to help model an emerging paradigm in the West

Dr. Sunil Datar, 56, was born in Pune, India, raised in New Delhi and emigrated to Canada in 1980. He specialized first in hypertension, then oncology, moving to Edmonton, Alberta, in 1989 to work at the Cross Cancer Institute, where he took an interest in palliative care medicine. The World Health Organization describes palliative care as "an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual." Dr. Datar's focus is end-of-life care for cancer patients, though palliative care is also used with debilitating medical conditions that are not life-threatening. In excerpts from a recent interview with his friend, Aran Veylan—a family court judge and long-time supporter of Edmonton's Mahaganapati Temple—the doctor (sdatar@shaw.ca) tells his story.



IN 1989 I CAME TO WORK AT EDMONTON'S CROSS CANCER INSTITUTE, then in a small building on University Avenue, when it still absorbed all the cancer patients from the local area. The number increased each year. In 1994 the Alberta Cancer Board president called a meeting of some 150 physicians and forewarned, "This cannot go on. The building cannot handle so many people. Every cancer patient thinks they have to come here, but we don't have the capacity." No one had a solution; most thought it was the Institute's problem, not theirs. But four of us from Cross—Paul Walker, Elizabeth Johnson, Barbara Seth and I—got together and decided terminal patients should be given palliative care outside the hospital. This would lessen the burden on Cross and also improve the end-of-life experience for the patient. That's how I became involved in palliative care.

But even now, palliative care is not well established in Canada. Home visits are its treatment mainstay, but these somehow don't even exist in Canada anymore. Textbooks on the subject do exist, but they are much less advanced than books on, say, cardiology. There is no four-year training program. The best you can get is a certificate.

The Basics of Palliative Care

First of all, you need to have a heart for it; you need to have a passion for it. Most importantly, there's no need to keep reminding patients that they are going to die. Just treat them as friends, treat them as patients. I believe it's essential to treat the whole family, not just the patient.

Your healthcare delivery structure may comprise two or three people, including a nurse and maybe even a student nurse or a student physician. Care is focused on the patient but extended to the

spouse or other direct relative and then to the children, uncles, aunts, friends, etc.

In my ordinary home visit, you have about five people in the room—me, the nurse and three people on the patient's side. First I sit down by the patient's bed and introduce myself, explaining my background in a brief, five-sentence synopsis so they know why this doctor is visiting now when they're actually going to die soon. The reason for my visit is thus established.

Next, I ask my standard medical history questions, as in a non-cancer or non-death situation. That gives me an idea where I'm going next. I ask patients to speak freely about whatever they want to tell me. Generally this includes how their cancer was diagnosed and what they have gone through. The important thing is to allow them to freely

express themselves.

After about ten minutes, they usually begin to repeat themselves. I say, "Well, how about now you tell me what is it that I can do for you?" Then they tell me about pain or other symptoms. That's when your knowledge applies and you offer what help you can.

Usually they conclude with, "What is going to happen to me now? How long do I have?" That's where a touch of spirituality comes in. I remind them and the relatives—especially the spouse—that even if you heard from the Cross Cancer Institute doctor that you have only three months to live, it is only God who gives you life and God is the one who's going to take away life. Neither the Cross Cancer doctor nor I can tell you how long you are going to live or when you are going to die.

I tell them that in subsequent visits, when I think the end is near, I will say, "I think we are getting there." "We are getting close to the door." "We are approaching the door." "We are almost at the door." I explain that my accuracy will get better when we are closer to that point. Amazingly enough, they actually absorb all this very well. The meeting always ends on a positive note because there is nothing to hide, nothing to keep a secret. Because I bring spirituality into it, they actually feel quite comfortable.

Understanding the Person's Needs

An important aspect of palliative care is to gain an understanding of the patient as a person. When I am in their house, I look at the pictures on the walls and books on the shelves. From this I get clues that are useful in communicating with the patient. An example is that of a Japanese immigrant who was living in an isolated area in Onoway, Alberta. It took us an hour to get to this absolutely run-down house, filled with books and papers and technological gadgets. There was no room to even stand. This man was in pain. I could sense that though he had lived in Canada for forty to fifty years, he



SHUTTERSTOCK

was regressing as he neared death because he wanted to do it the Japanese way. I don't know a lot about the Japanese way, but I got my clues from what I was seeing in his house—books and DVDs on Japanese culture. Many Asians, especially Japanese people, to my understanding, want to lie down on the ground. The two nurses who had accompanied me there kept insisting he lie on the bed, to be more comfortable. And he kept on telling them, "I do not want to lie down on the bed."

I said, "You know, I think we should put him on the ground on this thin little carpet; I think that's where he'll be comfortable." The nurses did not like that, but the patient just loved it, even though he could not express much because of his aphasia. As soon as his back touched the ground, his expression became one of complete solitude and acceptance that said, "I am close to the ground now. I think the time has come to leave this world." He died the next day. I could sense all this because I was in his zone. In an examining room, a totally controlled situation, I would not get this sort of insight.

Human touch: Palliative care aims to ensure appropriate medical and personal care to the natural end of life for all concerned

India's Natural Palliative Care

My relatives in Pune constantly heard from me this term—palliative care, palliative care. One cousin challenged, "You talk about this, but where can we see it?" I replied, "You know what it is. If you take me to see someone dying, I can show you." Just two days later my cousin phoned me and said, "The elderly mother of my friend is dying at home. Can I take you over there so I can see what you can do for her?"

I agreed, so he took me to a home in a badly rundown apartment complex. The family's main room could not have been more than six by eight feet. There I spoke to the rather pompous son and his wife. They explained to me that their mother is behind this wall and she is resting to die.

I tried to gather medical information from them. They gave bits of information about kidney, heart, this and that. I saw a young 20-something woman standing just outside the door, evidently wanting to hear what I was saying, to see who this doctor from Canada is and what he is going to do. Eventually I asked the son who this person was. He said, "Well, she's the one who actually looks after my mother." I replied, "Can I have a word with her?" And he responded, "Well, there is nothing really to talk to her about."

I countered, "OK, can I see your mother?" So I walked into another room where this elderly lady was lying on a cot—a *charpai* they call it there. She looked so much at peace. She was so well dressed, so well cared for. Her clothing was so clean. She was covered by a thin, old-looking, but clean blanket. Next to the bed was a tiny table with a glass of water, a couple of

bottles of pills and prayer beads. There were pictures of the Gods on the walls. It was a wonderful scene.

The elderly lady could not talk, so I chatted with her caretaker about what she does for her. She narrated the whole day's schedule. It was exactly palliative care, here being delivered in a Hindu home. The elderly lady did not require medication. She did not require my fancy infusion pumps. She did not require anything. She was at peace with God. This young lady in her twenties was the messenger and the caretaker. And all I did was agree with everything they were doing. The lady died within forty-eight hours. The concept of palliative care is practiced every day in India. It is so much a part of life that they don't have a name for it, nor has this concept been developed in the field of actual medicine there.

Movie Making

I'm involved in a project to make a movie on the topic. Why? Because a five-year-old girl sitting in Spruce Grove acreage, a ten-year-old boy in a Riverbend house, a 12-year-old school-going person, a

university-going person in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and a 55-year-old male whose father has been diagnosed with cancer—all these people need to be familiar with this term, *palliative care*, so they don't hear it only when death is near. All the age groups of both genders who have a relationship with the patient should know the term, so that it is not a surprise to them. Eventually palliative care should become an accepted norm. People should say, "I think my grandmother is close to passing on. Well, I saw this show on TV ten years ago and I felt comfortable about it; I think my grandmother will be okay." Right now, attitudes about death are always negative.

Many people have taken an interest in the film as a needed resource for Alberta. I was concerned that it had no monetary value attached to it, that it was strictly educational. But when I voiced my concerns to an accountant with the Alberta Health Services, he stopped me right away. "I would like to point out that by distributing this film over time, education will get delivered to the right kind of people, so the number of visits from patients to doctors will be reduced, the amount of time spent by the healthcare people with the patients will be reduced, the extent of confusion which is created around this field will be reduced, the amount of interest generated among physicians to deliver these healthcare services in homes will be increased, thereby the monies will be saved." From his point of view, such a movie would save them millions of dollars after five or ten years.

Dying of Old Age

Under our present medical concepts, people have to die from something, they can't just die of old age. When I am required to fill out a death certificate, I am supposed to write down the cause of death. For one elderly lady in a nursing home, I wrote "normal aging." The coroner's office called me and said that was not an acceptable cause. I would have to put something else. We settled on "coronary artery



Hands-on care: What we call palliative care is naturally present in all ancient cultures

disease" because everybody has it when they're dying, as did this elderly lady. Whether that was the cause of death, I don't know. But it satisfied the coroner. Later he himself realized that there are people who just die of age, and not some disease. Our College of Physicians has spoken in terms of life—maintaining life, improving life, this life, that life. It is only now they have accepted that it is okay to die. Finally we can tell the patient's angry wife that her husband died because of aging. There is no need for her to file a case of negligence over it. It was something that had to happen. Death is equally part of life.

Future Plans

In the next five years I am going to work on spreading the concept of palliative care. I don't know how many practicing physicians I will get to adopt this approach, since they will not see any monetary gain in it, so I'm going to start with medical school, with the medical students. They are brilliant, still open and just absorb everything. I think I will have great success at that level.

Annual Statement of Ownership

Statement of ownership, management and circulation (required by USPS DMM 70783) of *Hinduism Today*, published four times a year at 107 Kaholalele RD, Kapaa, HI 96746-9304, for October 1, 2013. General business offices of the publisher are located at 107 Kaholalele RD, Kapaa, HI 96746-9304. Name and address of publisher is Swami Bodhinatha Veylan, 107 Kaholalele RD, Kapaa, HI 96746-9304. Name and address of editor is Swami Sadasivanatha Palani, 107 Kaholalele RD, Kapaa, HI 96746-9304. Name and address of managing editor is Swami Arumugam Katir, 107 Kaholalele RD, Kapaa, HI 96746-9304. Owner is Himalayan Academy, 107 Kaholalele RD, Kapaa, HI 96746-9304. There are no known bondholders, mortgagees or other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities. The average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months is: (a) Total number of copies printed: 13,477; (b) Paid circulation: (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales: 6,194; (2) Paid or requested mail subscriptions: 3,759; (c) Total paid and/or requested circulation: 9,953; (d) Free distribution by mail: 716; (e) Free distribution outside the mail: 1,345; (f) Total free distribution: 2,061; (g) Total distribution: 12,014 (h) Copies not distributed: (1) Office use, leftovers, spoiled: 1,463; (2) Return

from news agents: not applicable; (i) Total: 13,477; Percent paid and/or requested circulation: 82.85%. The actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date is: (a) Total number of copies printed: 12,920; (b) Paid circulation: (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales: 6,470; (2) Paid or requested mail subscriptions: 3,722; (c) Total paid and/or requested circulation: 10,192; (d) Free distribution by mail: 696; (e) Free distribution outside the mail: 1,339; (f) Total free distribution: 2,035; (g) Total distribution: 12,227; (h) Copies not distributed: (1) Office use, leftovers, spoiled: 693; (2) Return from news agents: not applicable; (i) Total: 12,920; Percent paid and/or requested circulation: 83.36%. I certify that all information furnished above is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this statement or who omits material or information requested on the statement may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

Swami Durganatha Shanmuga, Administrator.



KARNATAKA

Born, 1908: Hindu of the Year, 2013

Sree Sree Dr. Shivakumara Swami, head of Siddaganga Math, is honored for his decades of leadership in religion, education and character building

WHEN SWAMIJI WAS BORN, MAHATMA Gandhi was a 39-year-old lawyer in South Africa, Swami Sivananda a 21-year-old medical student in Tanjore and Jawaharlal Nehru a 19-year-old science student at Cambridge. World War I ended when he was 11; the Soviet Union formed when he was 14; World War II began when he was 37 and Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon when he was 61. By the time the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Sree Sree Dr. Shivakumara Swami was 83—well beyond normal retirement age, but anything but retired. At that point in his life, as the head of Siddaganga Math, one of the foremost Lingayat *maths* (home of the guru) in Karnataka, he continued to not only fulfill his religious duties as he had since 1941, but was teaching mathematics, Sanskrit and English in the Siddaganga school system. He remains today completely immersed in the affairs of the math, the running of its 132 educational institutions with 9,000 students drawn from the poorest regions of the state and the needs of hundreds of thousands of devotees. For his exemplary leadership with an impact not only in Karnataka but around the world, *HINDUISM TODAY* honors Sree Sree Dr. Shivakumara Swami with the Hindu Renaissance Award as "Hindu of the Year" for 2013.

Learning of the award, Sri Jayendra Puri Swami, head of Kailash Ashram in Bengaluru noted: "Swamiji is most deserving. How fortunate we are to be in the midst of such a *siddha purusha* (God-Realized being) in these times. He is truly an incarnation of Siva, or else he cannot be doing so much at this age." For our full story on Swamiji in the April/May/June, 2013 issue, go to: bit.ly/Siddaganga.

Though the 106-year-old pontiff adheres to the tradition of not crossing the ocean, he has an immense global reach through his devotees, according to Choodie Shivaram who wrote *HINDUISM TODAY*'s report on Swamiji. Hundreds travel to India each year for his birthday celebrations. Thousands have embraced the philanthropic service of Swamiji, especially in the fields of education and feeding the poor. Many supporters have themselves risen from the humblest of backgrounds with Swamiji's help.

One such devotee, Dr. Veerana, now a se-



PHOTO COURTESY SIDDAGANGA MATH

A life devoted to education:
Sree Sree Dr. Shivakumara
Swami of Siddaganga Math

in cancer research. But for Swamiji's support, many professors, engineers and doctors now serving the international community would never have embarked upon their careers."

Dr. Shambhu Banic, now living in Washington DC, attended the math's schools in the 1950s. Founder of the Veerashaiva Samaja of North America, he writes, "Swamiji's service to humanity and in educating hundreds of thousands of impoverished and orphaned students for over 80 years is matchless in the history of mankind."

Sajjan Shiva, president of the Siddaganga Humanitarian Mission, USA, praised Swamiji's egalitarian efforts, "He does not pay attention to the caste, creed or religion from which the students arrive at the math. All of them are equal. It is not a small feat to maintain so many students and provide them a spiritual and career-oriented education."

The Hindu Renaissance Award for Hindu of the Year was created in 1990 by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, founder of *HINDUISM TODAY*, to recognize and strengthen Hindu leaders worldwide.

Previous awardees are Swami Paramananda Bharati ('90), Swami Chidananda Saraswati ('91), Swami Chinmayananda ('92), Mata Amritanandamayi Ma ('93), Swami Satchidananda ('94), Pramukhswami Maharaj ('95), Satya Sai Baba ('96), Sri Chinmoy ('97), Swami Bua ('98), Swami Chidananda Saraswati of Divine Life Society ('99), Ma Yoga Shakti ('00), T. S. Sambamurthy Sivachariar ('01), Dada J.P. Vaswani ('02), Sri Tiruchi Mahaswamigal ('03), Dr. K. Pichai Sivacharya ('04), Swami Tejomayananda ('05), Ramesh Bhai Oza ('06), Sri Balagangadharanathaswami ('07), Swami Avdheshanand ('08), Swami Gopal Sharan Devacharya ('09), Sri P. Parameswaran ('10) and Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji ('11) and the Silpa Parampara of temple builders ('12).



CULTURE

Nikolina Calls for Bharatanatyam Revival

Dedicating her life to dance in India, Croatian-born Ms. Nikoleski sets a powerful example of self-discipline as she carries forward the work of India's grand masters

Our Delhi correspondent, Rajiv Malik, interviewed a young lady from Europe who has made India her home, dedicating herself to Bharatanatyam and teaching. Her narrative of her life of dance, cultural education and the need to preserve our cultural arts reads like a manifesto for Hinduism's future.

I WAS BORN IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA, which was once a part of Yugoslavia. My mother, a gymnast in her youth, enrolled me in gymnastics at the early age of three and a half, in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. Gymnastics is connected to dance, and we progressed to learning classical ballet,

contemporary dance and folk dance. In high school I chose gymnasium as my main subject, along with history, English, mathematics, etc. During those same years, I attended another school that taught dance, along with subjects like yoga, history of dance, pedagogy, history of arts, history of music, piano and singing. For four years I had a full day of education every day: high school in the morning, with a focus on gymnastics, and dance school in the evening, or the other way around.

Yoga was not a part-time thing. We had daily yoga classes, exams and evaluation just like other courses. We learned the meaning of the asanas and pranayams, delved into

the philosophy and mythology and came to know more about Indian culture. Some of our instructors had been trained at Sivananda Yoga Centre and other places in Rishikesh. By fourteen I was practicing yoga and pranayama, with a deep knowledge of them.

Croatia is a multicultural country. It hosts international dance and theater festivals every year, with troupes from around the world. But it was rare for people to come from India. Finally, I saw my first Bharatanatyam dancer, Sonal Mansingh, when she brought a troupe from India to Zagreb. She told our top dance students about the importance of yoga for Bharatanatyam, about mudras and the

Language of dance: *When the dancer uses both hands to describe an object or paint a picture, these hand gestures are referred to as samuyukta hastas. Here Nikolina shows us the blossoming lotus. In yoga (above right), her form is strong, precise and graceful.*

impact they have on the dancer and viewer.

Though my exposure to Sonal Ji was limited, it was the first trigger. She told us Bharatanatyam was a holistic way of living. Everything mattered—how you walk and talk, how you dress, how you feel and how you breathe. I was so impressed by this holistic way, which included the dance, yoga, mudras, storytelling, philosophy and working on yourself. To me it was something complete, not fragmented—life and art were bound together. From that day onward my interest in Indian classical dance and yoga grew. I researched, read more and watched documentaries about Indian classical dance,



temples, devadasis, the philosophy and mythology.

But I had the impression Bharatanatyam could only be practiced by Indians—it was so very Hindu and connected to Gods like Siva, Parvati and Ganesh that non-Indians could not practice it, and the professional scene was reserved for the Indians, Hindus and Brahmins. So when I turned eighteen, I left home to go to Austria and then Germany to focus my training on contemporary dance. There, due to the greater frequency of Indian concerts and more and more interaction with the Indian artists, it became clear that I could also learn Bharatanatyam and even take it as a profession. Without any idea of the future and having never attended a single Bharatanatyam class, I decided to come to India, where I now live.

In 2004, at 27, I started in a gurukul in Kerala, the Bhaskar College of Fine Arts. I made rapid progress in Bharatanatyam because of my foundation in yoga and contemporary ballet. In Germany I had done a tough four-year university course in contemporary dance, and later became a teacher, choreographer and a professional dancer. The positioning and centering in contemporary dance and Bharatanatyam are the same, though called by different names. I mastered a repertoire and completed my arangetram in just three months. It normally takes an Indian student seven to ten years to do her arangetram.

After six months, Saroja Vaidyanathan—one of the eight or ten dance gurus recognized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)—advised me to get a scholarship from ICCR. I did so and came to Delhi, taking her as my guru. I stayed with her, started my studies at her Ganesha Natyalaya and studied with her for six years.

I also learned about the lifestyle and culture. Everything was different from

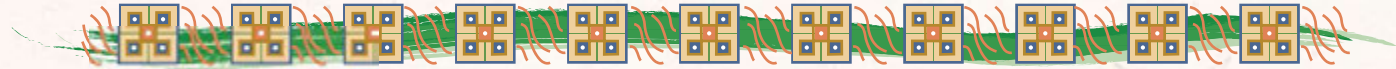
Europe—the way you communicate, the way you dress, the food. I learned simple things like wearing a sari, putting a bindi and tying my hair in a certain manner with flowers.

My relationship with my guru was quite intense. I spent the whole day in the studio. Some foreign scholarship students dropped the course midway. Not everyone can cope with India, the traffic and chaos. There were only five or six full-day students. But my background was different. I had already devoted my life full-time to dance. Guruji appreciated this and gave me more chances to learn and perform in celebrations like Sivaratri and programs in Khajuraho. So I got much more exposure than other students. My every minute was dedicated to the learning of dance. I was committed 150 percent. I would never change my profession.

A dancer may give professional performances, get paid well, participate in festivals, theater performances and temple functions, traveling constantly. But that is a stressful career, because there is a lot of uncertainty. Teaching is the most supportive lifestyle for a Bharatanatyam professional. We just pass on our knowledge. So I became a dance teacher and am currently employed at Father Agnil School, where I teach seniors and juniors. If I traveled too much, I would lose my regular students in the school.

Decline of Bharatanatyam

I am saddened to see that Delhi girls' interest in Bharatanatyam is so low, and going down each year. Even in those who are doing it, the devotion and inner feeling is lacking. Bharatanatyam is not just meant to burn your calories. It is a different dance form, with a totally different meaning. If you are singing or dancing about Krishna, you have to have a certain relationship with it. But this generation is more interested in Bollywood



or Salsa or Hip Hop.

I have been here in Delhi for six years, and I visit theaters every evening. There are so many performances of Kathak, Bharatanatyam and Chhau, but there are hardly any students of dance in the audience. Students must see other dancers perform, learn more and get inspired. But now, even at prestigious dance festivals where top artists perform, the auditoriums are empty. Anywhere else in the world such performances would be sold out—you would not be able to get a ticket. But here, where such performances are free and you can just walk in, the audience is not there. I find this very sad, and I believe the whole Bharatanatyam movement needs a revival or renaissance.

Schoolchildren can opt for dance as part of their curriculum, like opting for sports or a course in Hindi. This way the parents do not have to pay anything extra for dance training. They enroll and I teach them. If they take outside classes, they have to pay, and the training is different.

Interest in the dance forms is a regional thing. Ninety percent of those who come to learn Bharatanatyam are from South India, mostly Tamilians. There are precious few North Indians—hardly anyone from Delhi and no one from Rajasthan. Most people of these areas are interested in Kathak, as it originated in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Kerala has Kathakali. Andhra Pradesh has Kuchipudi. Those practicing these dance forms come from the Brahmin families. While some children are inspired by the dance form, the primary impetus comes from the parents. Carnatic music, vina and Bharatanatyam are part of Tamil identity. The intent to preserve that remains strong. But once they have the arangetram, the final ceremony, they do not perform it ever again. The moment it is finished, they quit dancing. For me, that is heartbreaking.

Obviously, the life of a professional dancer/teacher is not for everyone—maybe just for five percent. One may get married, have a baby and have family duties to perform. Even then, dance should at least continue as personal sadhana. But that is not done. After learning dance for seven years and doing the arangetram, more than eighty percent will quit dancing. The moment they get diksha, initiation, they stop. Parents do not allow them to continue, or they lose interest. Why the girls stop performing or practicing dance after arangetram is a big topic for us to focus on. It is because of the Indian society.

The Challenges of Teaching

As in yoga where you have different levels of students—*uttam*, *madhyam*, those who are enthusiastic and excel, those with mediocre interest who make little progress—so too with dance. The lazy ones are just waiting

for an excuse to stop. Many drop out halfway through. Others hear just one word and they are fully alert. Many factors are involved: their character, level of interest and parental input. So you cannot generalize. Students also have unique challenges. Some have problems with technique, others will have problems with *abhinaya*, the expressions. And for some it is just a flow, and it is all very easy.

Abhinaya is nothing but the expression of the rasa, the flavor, the mood. I had a deep knowledge of the Indian mythology by the time I came here. But for the child whose parents may have come here from South India, what for them is the relevance of Krishna and Yashoda and their stories? How do you convey the expression of wonder on Yashoda's face when she sees all three words in Krishna's mouth? How can one communicate to the child that kind of awareness and appreciation? It will all depend on how good the teacher is. If I just tell them Krishna was an avatar and was supreme Lord, it is flat. I have to use my knowledge and imagination to inspire the children to learn. I have to open their third eye, their visualization. When they can imagine what is happening in all the different worlds, then they get to the *adbhuta rasa*, the emotion of wonder.

Parampara Tradition Must Adapt

In the East and West alike, the reverence for the guru is very much there. My German teachers were even stricter than Saroja-ji. If one is doing poorly, she suggests that perhaps it has not been a good day and you must try to do better tomorrow. But in Germany my teacher would immediately ask the student to leave the dance studio and not return. If a high level of discipline is your measure of tradition, then you can say I am very traditional. If the student's work is not up to a certain level, I would tell them not to pursue this dance form. Give everything or just leave it. There is no middle path. Even if you do not intend to be a professional, you have to give it one hundred percent of your body and mind here and now. Whether it is dance or academic study, do it with commitment.

The way Bharatanatyam is taught must change. In ancient times the disciple lived with the guru in the same house, as family, but today's students have little time to spend with the teacher or guru. It is still a family relationship, but of a different type.

A Life of Self-Discipline

I have been a vegetarian since I was thirteen. I do not smoke. I

have never had a sip of alcohol in my life. I came into yoga at an early age and always had rigorous physical training. I control my mind through it. I go to bed around 10:30pm and I wake up around 5:45am every day. When I am up, I am up. I do not take tea in the morning. I am fresh because I came from my sleep. We do not need factors from outside. I have my own morning routine and leave for the school at 6:45. At 1:30 schoolteaching is over and I practice, keeping up my own repertoire and rehearsing for performances. Then, from 3 to 6pm I have classes for outside students of Bharatanatyam, ballet and contemporary dance.

Brahmacharya (celibacy) is also important. I emphasize this all the time, especially in Bharatanatyam, because you need to focus your complete energy on the dance and not waste it. Especially for students, brahmacharya brings focus, energy and determination. I have never seen myself taking up grihastha ashram or raising a family. I would like to follow Rukmini Devi, who had no children, or Leela Samson, who never married.

As a non-Indian and non-Hindu, not born into this culture, I have been received with great generosity, hospitality and appreciation. My biggest disadvantage and problem is language: I cannot speak or read Tamil, Telugu or Sanskrit. I do not need translation for love, suffering and pain, as these are universal. But I cannot go through the scripts myself. When I have to learn something new about Bharatanatyam, I must ask friends to translate. I am studying Hindi and Sanskrit and read to some extent, but if I get some elaborate text from *Vedas*, I need someone's help.

Still, I think being a non-Indian has worked to my advantage. I see so many



Following the footsteps of the masters: (opposite) Nikolina with her guru, Saroja Vaidyanathan, founder of the Ganesh Natyalaya institute in Delhi; (above) Saroja carefully fine-tunes the subtle position of her student's hand gesture.

people who are born into this culture sitting on a treasure box but oblivious to it. Born into it, they take it for granted. It is their heritage, but they do not know anything about it. I know what is in the treasure box, so I work to take it out. That goes to my advantage.

Making a career out of dance is rare. You can count such people on your fingers. Priyadarshani Govind, Leela Samson, Malavika Sarukkai and Alarmel Wali are some of my role models. Rukmini Devi is the first whom I revere as a person. She was even nominated for the president of India. She propagated vegetarianism and nonviolence. She also promoted the cotton saris and Indian crafts, working with one's own hands, gardening, sadhana and yoga. She was a true Hindu in all the values and traditions. She implemented these things in her institution, Kalakshetra. For me she is the ultimate inspiration.

I want to start my own dance institute like my guruji has Ganesh Natyalaya. I will live

there and we will have Bharatanatyam, yoga classes and music. I would just select those who are fully committed and really want to learn, who have the feeling and devotion that is required. In the morning we will start with yoga and eye exercises, along the lines of Kalakshetra. I would like to impart knowledge of Carnataka music and holy scriptures, *Upanishads*, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

Our Culture Preserves Our Identity

Any art form, whether dance, music or poetry, is a direct identification of our culture, our personality and who we are. I would say it is the first identification, like language. A language has a history behind it. Chanting mantras in Sanskrit creates identity. Classical Indian dance is the identity of the culture of the nation, and preserving it is the first duty of the people of this country. It is also important because it gives so many values to society. It creates elevated and alert human beings. If for five hours a day you are chanting the name of Krishna and dancing and performing arati, in the evening you are not likely to take drugs, kill people or do or say bad things. Because when you are chanting the name of Krishna your whole being is transformed. Dance creates human beings who are more conscious and more aware, who are

more compassionate and less aggressive.

I give you your own example, Rajiv. You are wearing a crystal mala, a rudraksha mala and a yellow kurta, so I can easily make out that you are a Hindu. The yellow kurta also gives the impression of an ashram-type way of life. By doing all this you are basically preserving your culture. When a lady wears a sari and bindi, there is no confusion about her identity. Clearly, she is a Hindu and she is an Indian. Once you stop wearing sari or stop performing classical dance of India we do not know who you are anymore. You can be anyone or no one. Your identity in that case is not just questionable, it is lost. I am not against wearing this style or that style of dress. I am just saying that traditional dress reveals and preserves the identity of a person.

The dance has a direct relation to Hindu society. It speaks of the norms and values of Hindu society, Hindu culture and Hindu religion. Unless we keep them alive, the customs and traditions will just fade away. I think the nation and religion, though separate, need to preserve their traditions in dance and music. In this case the heritage is common to both the India and the religion. It is the prime duty of the religion, society and nation to preserve its traditions and culture.



Blended performance: Chandrika and her Western and Indian musicians perform at a benefit for the American India Foundation at the posh Cipriani Wall Street restaurant in 2011.

In a sense, my upbringing made me embrace what I consider one of the primary tenets of Hinduism and of spirituality—that the paths to Divinity are many; that people worship many Gods, but we honor all of them; and that we respect each other. Later on, as I have now worked with meditation, pranayama and spiritual practices for years, I am viscerally beginning to understand that God is inside of us in the form of light and bliss—“*Chidananda roopa shivoham shivoham*” [the refrain from Adi Shankara’s famed song *Atmas-takam* composed in the 8th century ce, literally rendered as, “I am consciousness and bliss. I am Shiva, I am Shiva.”]

Your thoughts on religious rituals and spirituality?

The division between ritualism and spirituality has really bothered me. Growing up, it seemed like the traditional way we were raised was very ritualistic. We were expected to follow rules without ever having a real understanding of why. I would rebel against why women could not do some things. But as I learn more, I begin to see how moving, beautiful and profound our rituals are. Over the last several years, I have intensively incorporated Vedic spirituality based on the Vedic way of life.

I have incorporated pranayama, meditation, community service, yoga, reading and chanting as an integral part of my life. This has deepened my connection to myself, to others and to my religious roots. Hinduism is one of the only religions that requires you to undergo a process of self-discovery—to find out who you are and feel the Brahman—and these practices allow us to have glimpses of that experience.

How hard is it to raise a family in the US as Hindus, and what do you think is the future for Hinduism in America?

It was a challenge raising my daughter with strong religious foundations—though I worked hard to do so. I dream of a day when we will have a set time for worship—like a Sunday church routine. I dream of these routines incorporating Sunday School as well as parental discourses and group chanting. I wonder whether we should create learning and support programs for youth and young adults who struggle with life in all its dimensions. I wish there was almost a standard textbook and a national course/graduation—much like the bar mitzvah. We need to create organized community service programs and chaplaincy programs and follow the karma yoga aspect of our teachings.

These suggestions may seem heretical, but for kids in the US who grow up without the osmosis of Hindu culture all around them (as it is in India), it is especially important to create structure and belonging. Traditional temples alone will not be enough. Many smaller groups are working on pieces of this in different communities. Many religious gurus teach parts of different philosophies and have their own structures. We all need to come together without ego and create a national approach. I believe there is a crying need for that.

What would be your wish list for young Hindus?

I wish there was a way that we can induct all the young Hindus into the practices of spiritual background of Vedic rituals. Most of them are so beautiful, so moving and so profound. We need to make spirituality an integral part of a Hindu upbringing. I wish meditation, pranayama, chanting, yoga and service were simply rites of passage for all young Hindu children, in addition to the prayer rituals and rites. I wish all Hindu temples had mentoring and community ser-

INTERVIEW

Music Is the Breath of Her Life

Businesswoman and Grammy-nominated musician Chandrika Tandon talks music, religion, business and the future of Hinduism in America

BY LAVINA MELWANI, NEW YORK

THE DAUGHTER OF A FATHER WHO WAS A BANKER AND A MOTHER who played the veena, Chandrika Krishnamurthy Tandon grew up in Chennai in a large joint family. As in all middle-class Indian homes, education was very important. Hers was also a family which loved music. “In those days we used to have frequent power cuts—and whenever that happened, the three of us—my brother, my sister and I—would sit and sing,” she recalls. “We didn’t care how long the power cuts lasted!” Eventually the three overachieving siblings came to America: sister Indra Nooyi is now chairperson and CEO of Pepsico; brother Narayanan is in hedge funds and Chandrika heads Tandon Capital Associates.

After graduating from the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, Chandrika was a partner at the corporate consulting firm McKinsey and Company before founding Tandon Capital Associates in 1992. She has restructured many companies, and her name is well known on Wall Street. She is also active in the world of education, serving on the Board of Trustees of New York University, the Board of Overseers of NYU Stern School of Business, the Dean’s Council of NYU Wagner School of Public Service and the President’s Council on International Activities at Yale University.

Yet, for Chandrika, the interconnected worlds of music and religion are never far away. Her Krishnamurthy Tandon Foundation (with assets of \$14 million as of 2011) has set up a chair for Contemporary Studies in Hinduism at Yale University. It is also one of the founding members of the Hindu Community Outreach Program

at the Queens Hindu Temple, supporting large-scale community activities for seniors and children. In 2011, in addition to \$15 million for the chair, the foundation made grants of \$156,000 to the Art of Living Foundation, \$142,000 to the American India Foundation and lesser sums to numerous community and educational organizations.

To offset the challenges of her day job in the financial world, Chandrika turns to yoga and her childhood love of music. She explains, “I am a vegetarian. I meditate and do pranayama and kriyas every day. My goal this year is to improve the frequency of my yoga practice. I believe in a disciplined, sattvic lifestyle, even though following it is quite a challenge. These practices are like brushing one’s teeth every day—except I brush away negativities and clean my mind. It is incredible that we have these practices available to us.”

Chandrika’s music brought her to international attention in an unexpected way, almost by accident, when she had to decide what to give her father-in-law—who already had everything—on his 90th birthday. She decided to give him a life-affirming mantra, “Om Namasivaya,” specially set to music for him and recorded in her own voice. All who heard it loved it and encouraged her on her musical journey. Music had always been a passion for her, but as in many Indian families, it had always taken a back seat to education and work. Still, she managed to study with a master of Indian classical music and became an accomplished composer and vocalist. Chandrika’s journey has taken her to many major international concert halls to interact with new audiences, all hungry for the magic of her songs and chants.

Her second release, the album “Soul Call,” topped the music charts and was nominated in 2011 for the Grammy in the category of World Music. That collection of devotional songs, based on the mantra “Om Namonarayana,” brought her many new fans around the globe who were moved by the songs’ healing power—from expectant mothers to the ailing and even those facing death. The experiences have been moving.

Chandrika’s latest effort, “Soul March,” brought 75 Indian and Western musicians together, using ancient and modern instruments, to record Gandhi’s favorite bhajan, “Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram.” This was the anthem of the Salt March during the Freedom Movement in India. Says Chandrika, “Every one of us is on a quest—seeking freedom. Soul March is a tribute to all those journeys.”

All her albums are produced by Soul Chants Music, a not-for-profit label she set up to partner with over 60 organizations including hospitals, universities and nonprofits so that proceeds from album sales go to benefit health and education. She says of the chants: “It is the vibrations—it’s a journey into yourself. You have to open yourself and take the journey. Your voice is the vehicle, a platform. When I’m four hours into music, I’m unshakeable—I’m so grounded.” One reviewer put his reaction this way: “I’m not sure how she does it, but Chandrika makes music that is good for the soul. Somehow it just makes me feel better.”

At this point, I will let Chandrika tell her own story:

Can you talk about your Hindu influences growing up?

We grew up in a very traditional middle-class household in Chennai, which was rife with prayers and rituals. While I did not understand them fully then, it became second nature to pray to God for everything, before everything, and offer thanks after everything. We also explored devotion through music as we memorized large bodies of prayers, such as the Vishnu Sahasranamam or the Suprapatham, by listening to All India Radio every single day.

But I also went to a Catholic convent school and studied the Bible, Christian scriptures, and had a picture of Jesus Christ alongside the Hindu aspects of Divinity. I also had close Muslim friends. I never thought about religion as dividing. I was always curious about the teachings of the other religions.



SHERVIN LAINEZ

vice arms which invite participation by the young and old—so we can practice seva and karma yoga in addition to bhakti yoga. I also wish knowledge sessions were *de rigueur* so we could easily practice jnana yoga. This is especially important outside India; and the US can be a model for Indians as well.

How do you reconcile your business world and spirituality? Naturally, my view of business is altered by spirituality, but the two worlds are not in conflict except in terms of time commitments. I would love to dedicate a lot more time to meditation, yoga, music and sattvic living. Business, social and philanthropic commitments occupy a lot of my time, and it's challenging and often very hard to allocate that.

On the other hand, my spiritual practices have changed the way I view people, problems and relationships; they have altered my view of success and perfection in both life and business. I have become a lot more centered and able to let go of outcomes and concentrate on the work and the journey. My spiritual practices also make me realize viscerally how much the Divine is of everything we do.

Tell us about the Hindu Choir? An Indian choir was challenging because, in traditional Hindu worship, singing together and worshipping together is not a common practice. It's more of an individual act. The music favors solos as opposed to harmonies and group singing. I was inspired to start the choir because of the joy I encountered with gospel choirs in Harlem and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The temple choir is a means of combining Western choral and harmonic traditions with ancient Indian chants and ragas and bringing together a community in music.

The choir itself has been a bonding of the community. The seniors show up every Sunday in the harshest of weather, sometimes taking many forms of transport in an unfamiliar country. It makes you appreciate the awesome power of music to bind and heal. We have included everybody. There are no judgments on whether anyone is good or not. Everyone is perfection. Everyone is there to experience the Divine through music. But they work very hard!

We have worked on complex texts—from the Navagraha Stotra (a prayer to the nine planets) to Devi Sutras, Ashtakams, Shatkams and chants. Now these are sung all the time by the members. Singing makes it easier to remember. It is truly enthralling to hear a group of dedicated non-singers, 50–85 years old, sing with enthusiasm, devotion and utter joy. A community of love is born. What a gift to be able to be able to teach and share, and be enveloped in this love!

What's the outlook for Indian music in the West? Indian classical music is a very nuanced and complex topic. There are different levels of understanding and appreciation one can have. On one hand, you can lose yourself in the experience when you hear the great masters. But it takes years to understand the subtleties and appreciate the mastery of notes, rhythm and improvisation that goes into a brilliant performance. We need to create music appreciation courses to explain, simplify and make it accessible to the West—even though already there are many thousands of aficionados. This is particularly true of vocal music. Even after years of training, I still learn so much when I sit with seasoned musicians. It is a vast ocean.

Both here and in India there is a crop of talented young musicians who are rocking the world of classical music. Some have had the traditional gurukul upbringing with their masters for years. Then you have a few that were born in the US and have made Indian music their passion and career. It will be exciting to see what these people produce in the years to come—as their prism is a world where much more of the global music is integrated through YouTube and Facebook. The more popular genres like Bollywood music are much more accessible to the Western audiences, and interesting collaborations are happening. Exciting times are ahead!

What was the inspiration behind Soul March? I have always loved the traditional bhajan "Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram," so beloved in India and associated with Gandhi's Salt March of 1930. The Salt March—a ten-day nonviolent protest made by thousands of people to challenge the British salt monopoly in colonial India—sparked a revolution of freedom-seekers in India. It is an inspiration



SHERVIN LAINEZ

for everyone, from every walk of life, from every part of the globe. It inspires a universal message of freedom, that we are all seeking freedom in ways big and small, from different things.

In the Indian Vedic tradition, aspects of Divinity are brought to life through personification. Each aspect has a name and a description. Most people have their favorites. The aspect of Divinity that is perfect wisdom, goodness and a perfect human being is typically called "Rama" or "Ram," a popular name, which means the light within (*ra*—light; *mama*—within).

My quest, particularly with Soul March, is part of my own journey inside to find my light and to inspire listeners to find the light within themselves. It is also an expression of my musical freedom to take a much-loved popular hymn and reinterpret it with different musical genres. Finally, in doing this I pay tribute to all the journeys of people who seek freedom and want to express their voice.

What is remarkable about this chant? The musical evolution on each track happened almost on its own. Though I have trained in Hindustani classical music under the greatest masters for years, and Carnatic masters as well, my personal musical world is full of many global rhythms and melodies. I live in New York City and have listened to jazz, classical, hip hop and, of course, rock and roll for years. I have also lived in Brazil and in many parts of Europe and Asia. I learned languages such as French and Portuguese through music. So I am always finding connections between ragas and tunes and creating my own when I hear amazing grooves. This composition journey was just that. Orchestally and rhythmically I went for different genres. For example, we used the saxophone, piano, guitar and cello, but equally worked with ancient instruments like the dugdubi, ektara and esraj, as well as the traditional sarod and sitar. Over 75 musicians came together to record this, so you naturally see the richness of the sounds across the global panorama of music.

How have the Western musicians you work with responded to the challenges of Indian music, which is so much more complicated in scales and time? Have you dumbed it

On a musical march: (far left) Chandrika Tandon in concert with the seniors' choir at Lincoln Center, New York; (left) a few years back, Chandrika decided to balance her business life and religious life, a decision that bore fruit in a successful side career in music

down for them, or are they rising to it? During the recording and the performances, the Western musicians would use words and phrases like "entranced" and "blown away" to describe their experiences. It was quite a challenge for them to create beautiful movements within strictly structured raga rules, and they did so beautifully. Our live performances are joyous events. Even the recording sessions were a blast! They would evolve into impromptu concerts.

My goal in Soul March and all my albums is to share the music in a way that reaches a lot of people and lets them sing along and find the light within themselves. I am not here to express my virtuosity by complex improvisations and movements that only the aficionados can grasp. I do not dumb down the music so much as arrange it simply so everyone can sing along. But I am a purist in my raga interpretations. My masters will tell you that!

Are you working a lot with improvisation, or is your music planned out in advance? The compositions I record are created, composed and arranged with a lot of thought before they are recorded. I look for interesting and unusual ways to compose the song while still keeping the raga essence intact. However, when I perform live, I take a lot of liberties with the melodies. Indian classical music is so beautifully sophisticated. You can express different moods when you improvise, and it is a joy to let the feelings of the moment take over and have a musical conversation with the instrumentalists as well.

How is music a religious practice for you? Music harmonizes me as a person. It is hard to be down when you are singing. Intensive practice is meditation. It is like quieting one's mind and internal chatter for concentrated periods of time. It permeates all aspects of my being. Keeping a focused, calm and centered mind is, to me, the most important attribute of living my everyday life. Music enables me to get there most of the time.

The best music comes when I don't exist. I see this again and again—in myself and others. I am on a quest to lose myself. It is accelerating the inner transformation to find the light inside, and stay in. And it affects all parts of my life—my business, my family, my friendships, everything.

Music has made me understand perfection in a wholly different way. Having spent a lifetime striving for perfection, you really understand you *are* perfection today, right now, right here—that different people make different forms of music, and they are all beautiful and perfect. If the forest were only filled with nightingales, it would be a very boring forest indeed. This has become the prism with which I view my whole life and others around me—there is no judgment!

Also as I have been doing research for my music—to find verses, prayers, mantras and correct translations for my albums, my performances and my choir—I have now embarked on an intensive study of the Vedic scriptures and Sanskrit. It has been an extraordinarily enriching process of discovery—to dig deep into the works of Adi Sankara, or the Vedic mantras, or the major samhitas and slokas. I am definitely connecting with my roots in a much more spiritual way through my music.

LAVINA MELWANI is a New York-based journalist who writes for several international publications and blogs at www.lassiwithlavina.com. Follow her on Twitter @lassiwithlavina.

Why Not Hindu India?

Germany, with its minority religions, still calls itself Christian. Why not call India Hindu?

BY MARIA WIRTH

THOUGH I HAVE LIVED IN INDIA A LONG TIME, THERE are still issues here that I find hard to understand. For example, why do so many educated Indians become agitated when India is referred to as a Hindu country? The majority of Indians are Hindus. India is special because of its ancient Hindu tradition. Westerners are drawn to India because of Hinduism. Why then is there this resistance by many Indians to acknowledge the Hindu roots of their country? Why do some people even give the impression that an India which valued those roots would be dangerous? Don't they know better?

This attitude is strange for two reasons. First, those educated Indians seem to have a problem only with "Hindu" India, but not with "Muslim" or "Christian" countries. Germany, for example, is a secular country, and only 59 percent of the population are registered with the two big Christian churches (Protestant and Catholic). Nevertheless, the country is bracketed under "Christian countries" and no one objects. Angela Merkel, the Chancellor, stressed recently the Christian roots of Germany and urged the population "to go back to Christian values." In 2012 she postponed her trip to the G-8 summit to make a public address on Katholikentag, "Catholics Day." Two major political parties carry *Christian* in their name, including Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union.

Germans are not agitated that Germany is called a Christian country, though I actually would understand if they were. After all, the history of the Church is appalling. The so-called success story of Christianity depended greatly on tyranny. "Convert or die" were the options given—not only some five hundred years ago to the indigenous population in America, but also in Germany, 1,200 years ago, when the emperor Karl the Great ordered the death sentence for refusal of baptism in his newly conquered realms. This provoked his advisor Alkuin to comment: "One can force them to baptism, but how to force them to believe?"

Those times, when one's life was in danger for dissenting with the dogmas of Christianity, are thankfully over. Today many in the West do dissent and are leaving the Church in a steady stream. They are disgusted with the less-than-holy behavior of Church officials and they also can't believe in the dogmas, for example that "Jesus is the only way" and that God sends all those who don't accept this to hell.

The second reason why I can't understand the resistance to associate India with Hinduism is that Hinduism is in a different category from the Abrahamic religions. Its history, compared to Christianity and Islam, was undoubtedly the least violent as it spread in ancient times by convincing arguments and not by force. It is not a belief system that demands blind acceptance of dogmas and the suspension of one's intelligence. On the contrary, Hinduism encourages using one's intelligence to the hilt. It is an enquiry into truth based on a refined character and intellect. It comprises a huge body of ancient literature, not only regarding dharma and philosophy, but also regarding music,



architecture, dance, science, astronomy, economics, politics, etc. If Germany or any other Western country had this kind of literary treasure, it would be so proud and highlight its greatness on every occasion. When I discovered the *Upanishads*, for example, I was stunned. Here was expressed in clear terms what I intuitively had felt to be true, but could not have expressed clearly. Brahman is not partial; it is the invisible, indivisible essence in everything. Everyone gets again and again a chance to discover the ultimate truth and is free to choose his way back to it. Helpful hints are given but not imposed.

In my early days in India I thought every Indian knew and valued his tradition. Slowly I realized I was wrong. The British colonial masters had been successful in not only weaning away many of the elite from their ancient tradition but even making them despise it. It helped that the British-educated class could no longer read the original Sanskrit texts and believed what the British told them. This lack of knowledge and the brainwashing by the British education may be the reason why many so-called "modern" Indians are against anything Hindu. They don't realize the

difference between Western religions that have to be believed (or at least professed) blindly, and which discourage, if not forbid, their adherents to think on their own, and the multi-layered Hindu Dharma which gives freedom and encourages using one's intelligence.

Many of the Indian educated class do not realize that those who dream of imposing Christianity or Islam on this vast country will applaud them for denigrating Hindu Dharma, because this creates a vacuum where Western ideas can easier gain a foothold. At the same time, many Westerners, including staunch Christians, know the value of Hindu culture and surreptitiously appropriate insights from the vast Indian knowledge system, drop the original Hindu source and present it either as their own or make it look as if these insights had already been known in the West. As the West appropriates valuable and exclusive Hindu assets, what it leaves behind is deemed inferior. Unwittingly, these Indians are helping what Rajiv Malhotra of Infinity Foundation calls the *digestion* of Dharma civilization into Western universalism. That which is being digested, a deer for example, in this case Hindu Dharma, disappears whereas the digester (a tiger) becomes stronger.

If only missionaries denigrated Hindu Dharma, it would not be so bad, as they clearly have an agenda which discerning Indians would detect. But sadly, Indians with Hindu names assist them because they wrongly believe Hinduism is inferior to Western religions. They belittle everything Hindu instead of getting thorough knowledge. As a rule, they know little about their tradition except what the British have told them, i.e., that the major features are the caste system and idol worship. They don't realize that India would gain, not lose, if it solidly backed its profound and all-inclusive Hindu tradition. The Dalai Lama said some time ago that, as a youth in Lhasa, he had been deeply impressed by the richness of Indian thought. "India has great potential to help the world," he added. When will the Westernized Indian elite realize it?

MARIA WIRTH, 63, a freelance writer, has lived in India for the past 33 years. mariawirth12@gmail.com, mariawirthblog.wordpress.com.

Universal Peace through Dharma and Yoga

celebrating 150th birth anniversary of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Launch

Dharma and Yoga Fest

37 States
400 Programs
45,000 Participants

Dharma Bee

Dharma and Yoga Fest



Organized by

Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA

www.hssus.org

HSS conducts a structured values education program through its 150 branches nationwide to develop strong character and teamwork and leadership skills and to organize a dynamic and flourishing Hindu-American community.



Hindu Heritage Endowment

ANNUAL GANESHA BLESSING CEREMONY FOR STUDENTS IN MAURITIUS

On the island nation of Mauritius, school exams are a serious Hindu family affair, and it is regarded as quite legitimate for families to seek divine blessings on such important times. Many Hindus turn to their 'ishta devata' for blessings at their local temples. Over the years, the Spiritual Park, located in the north of the island, has become a national reference for such students' blessings. Hence at the Spiritual Park the first Sunday of the month of October, the period during which all internal and international exams start in Mauritius, has been dedicated to Mauritius students. Under the guidance of Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, members of Saiva Siddhanta Church, Mauritius Mission, organize an elaborate religious ceremony as an outreach mission which is attended by thousands of students who come to worship and receive the blessings of Lord Ganesha for their end of year school examinations.

The ceremony itself is a traditional one performed by Sivacharya priests to the eight-foot-tall majestic five-faced, ten-armed granite Panchamukha Ganapati. It consists of an elaborate homa, with a variety of traditional ingredients offered to the inner-world beings through the sacred fire to establish a firm communication with Lord Ganapati and His holy band of ganas.

Thousands of prayers written by students and their parents are burned on that day. At the end of the ceremony, blessed gifts consisting of pens, pencils and a sacred packet of vibhuti are offered in a printed pouch to all students. Parents as well as the youth happily consider these items very sacred for use in the examination room. Later during the year, many students come forward at the monthly havana to share inspired testimonies about their success in the exams. Having one's exams results associated with Lord Ganesha's blessings leaves a positive religious samskara in the young student's life.

Over the years, the Mauritius Spiritual Park has inspired thousands of devotees of all walks of life to a deeper religious life. This Park started with a vision. The founder, Gurudeva Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, had shared: "In 1986 I had a powerful vision of Lord Ganesha while I was here in Mauritius looking for property for Saiva Siddhanta Church. Lord Ganesha was walking from His temple attended by two priests. I was about to take a bath in the river where the river meets the sea. I was standing in the water with several sharks swimming around me. Lord Ganesha, accompanied by the two priests, looked at me and said, 'Just rub some oil on their noses and they will not harm you.' The vision led me directly to this special land by the Rempart River and its lagoon. The Spiritual Park is a fulfillment of that vision. I see it combining environmental and architectural beauty that will give spiritual peace and mystical knowledge to visitors for many generations in the future."

The Spiritual Park of Mauritius Endowment is HHE fund #31. The annual grant from this fund helps support the annual student homa held each October.

Learn more about this fund and the eighty-two individual funds under the umbrella of Hindu Heritage Endowment at www.hheonline.org. For an estate planning toolkit write to hhe@hindu.org.



Thousands of students gather at Mauritius' Spiritual Park to ask Lord Ganesha to bless and guide them as they head into end-of-year exams



HINDU HERITAGE ENDOWMENT

KAUAI'S HINDU MONASTERY, 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii, 96746-9304 USA
808-822-3012 ext 244 • fax: 808-822-3152 • hhe@hindu.org • www.hheonline.org

JULY TO SEPTEMBER ENDOWMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Kauai Aadheenam Monastic Endowment				Kauai Aadheenam Yagam Fund			
Anonymous	704.18	Rajendra Giri	110.00	Durvasa Alahan	100.00	Victoria Lynne Johnson	6.00
Roshan Harilela	375.00	Kulagan Moonesawmy	19.52	Vel Alahan	108.00		
Gunasekaran Kandasamy	187.91	Carmen Debora Murbach	450.00	Amarnath & Latha Devarmanai	425.00		
Gayatri Rajan	25.00	Gowri Nadason	165.48	Anonymous	2,948.35	Yogaswami Hindu Girls' Home of Sittandy Endowment	
Other Donations	71,987.48	Toshadevi Nataraj	140.00	Michael R. Eisen	25.00	Anonymous	398.63
Total	73,279.57	Aran Sambandar	108.00	Panshula Ganeshan	20.00	Jeri Arin	300.00
		Barathly Sockanathan	45.96	Debashis Ghosh	125.00	Marlene Carter	54.00
		Vayudeva Varadan	36.00	Toshadeva Guhan	108.00	Sunil Chacko	265.00
		Anonymous	554.18	Maha Lakshmi Gunasegaran	301.00	Maruthu Pandian Darmalingam	70.00
		Other Donations	4,800.00	Kodisvara Jothiswarar	52.87	Sasikumar Darmalingam	10.00
		Total	6,631.14	Siva Jothiswary	55.00	Kerry-Fleur	35.00
				Gunasekaran Kandasamy	383.03	Subramaniam Pennathur	50.01
Iraivan Temple Endowment				Alfiya Khasanova	100.00	Chittur V. Ramanathan	500.00
Kiran Davane	51.00	Sri Subramuniya Ashram Scholarship Fund		Vasant Krishnan	1,500.00	Ganga Sivanathan	150.00
Anonymous	2318.36	Anonymous	324.00	Shishir Lathi	1,001.00	Sivaruban & Nishiya Sivanesan	150.00
Dheeraj & Geeta Kumari Handa	303.00	Anonymous	10.00	Gaurav Malhotra	501.00	Andrew Stich	500.00
Victoria Lynne Johnson	22.00	Bala Sivaceyon	334.00	Darren & Yamuna Maynard	101.00	Soma Sundaram	10.00
Srividya Krishnan	51.00	Total		Silvarajoo Muniandy	20.00	Total	2,492.64
Niranjan Saravanapavan	3,000.00			M. & Shobana Mylvaganam	101.00		
Other Donations	58,819.98	Sri Subramuniya Kottam Fund		Kumar Natarajan	500.00	Siva Poomi School Trust	
Total	64,565.34	Anonymous	1800.00	Mano Navaratnarajah	150.00	Michael R. Eisen	25.00
		Shun K. Sunder	1,500.00	Janaka Param	108.00		
		Manny Yogarajah	150.00	Srinivasan Parthasarathy	8.00	Yogaswami Hindu Boys' Home Fund	
		Total	3,450.00	Mrunal Patel	108.00	Lenora Alderfer	50.00
				Nuckiren Pyeneecandee	64.52	Anonymous	544.00
Kauai Aadheenam Annual Archana Fund		Kumbhalavalai Ganesha Temple Endowment		Vasuhi Rasanayagam	115.86	Marlene Carter	54.00
Anonymous	150.00	Mano Navaratnarajah	75.00	Alex Ruberto	30.00	Maruthu Pandian Darmalingam	70.00
Hemakheshaa Naatha Batumallah	9.00			Aran Sambandar	163.00	Sasikumar Darmalingam	20.00
Mekaladeva Batumallah	9.00	Malaysia Hindu Renaissance Fund		Hitesvara Saravan	108.00	Total	738.00
Visen Candasamy	114.62	Maruthan Seenendyren	21.00	Parimala Selvaraj	101.00		
Nalini Chenganna	112.90	Hinduism Today Production Fund		Guhan Sivalingam	223.00	Murugan Temple of North America Puja Fund	
Victoria Lynne Johnson	22.00	Ron & Jennifer Burke	150.00	Tejasinha Sivalingam	21.00	Nidhya Sachidhanantham	20.00
Juhivaasana Koothan	8.15	P.C. Ghosh	90.00	Floyd Trumble	10.00	Vayudeva Varadan	36.00
Anil Kumar	36.00	Rajendra Giri	110.00	Anba Dayananden Valayten	12.68	Total	56.00
Punithavathi Kuppusamy	40.00	Hiranya Gowda	93.00	Sridhar Venkataraman	100.00		
Saroja Devi Manickam	3.10	Bhagawandas P. Lathi	5,000.00	Michael Wasylikiw	648.00	Ramanathaswamy Temple Cleaning Fund	
Bhaveshan Moorghe	6.54	Subramaniam Pennathur	50.01	Total	10,629.31	Danyse Crotti	150.00
Shanda Kumaran Moorghe	6.54	Sakuntalai Periasamy	27.69			Hiranya Gowda	99.00
Udeyadeva Moorghe	6.54	Anonymous	225.88	Saivite Hindu Scriptural Fund for the Visually Impaired		Manogaran Mardemootoo	97.63
Jogendra Mooroogen	4.88	Gayatri Rajan	25.00	Alex Ruberto	40.00	Kulagan Moonesawmy	19.52
Vidyadevi Mooroogen	4.88	Aran Sambandar	108.00	Ganga Sivanathan		Toshadevi Nataraj	60.00
Toshadevi Nataraj	60.00	Ganga Sivanathan	516.00	Michael Zimmermann	6.00	Ganga Sivanathan	300.00
Rama Pemmaraju Rao	21.00	Total	6,401.58	Total	100.00	Total	726.15
Subramaniam Pennathur	49.98			Sri Chandra Madhab Debnath Endowment		Cows of Kadavul and Iraivan Temples (Kovil Maadu) Endowment	
Hemavalli Sivalingam	2.77	Hindu Orphanage Endowment Fund		Shyamal Chandra Debnath	50.00	Anonymous	73.00
Total	667.90	Roshan Harilela	375.00	Michael R. Eisen	50.00	Dheeraj & Geeta Kumari Handa	93.00
		Chin Jase	10.00	Total	100.00	Natraj Narayanswami	44.00
Hinduism Today Lifetime Subscription Fund		Gunasekaran Kandasamy	187.91			Toshadevi Nataraj	30.00
Palani K. Aravazhi	499.00	Anonymous	50.00	Murugan Temple Yalpanam Festival Fund		Elena Woodard	108.00
Nalini Chenganna	112.90	Pankaj N. Lalaji	500.00	Pathmini Saravanapavan	150.00	Michael Zimmermann	6.00
Venkat & Lakshmi Gopalan	499.00	Alex Ruberto	50.00	Manitha Neyam Trust Fund		Total	354.00
Mark J. Johns	499.00	Rodney & Ilene Standen	30.00	Bala Sivaceyon	20.00		
Souda Koothan	64.52	Matthew Wiczork	10.00	Kerala Temple Trust		Pakistan Hindu Empowerment Fund	
Shakti Mahadevan	200.00	Total	1,212.91	Kishore G. & Subha Pathial	126.70	Sanjay Dahya	30.96
Bhargav Mehta	998.00	Hindu Education Endowment		Taos Hanuman Fund		Anil Kumar	36.00
Sivakavonian Moonesawmy	120.00	Hasu N. & Hansa H. Patel	100.00	Elena Woodard	108.00	Total	66.96
Dayavati Murugan	25.00	Hindu Press International Endowment Fund		Kapaleeshwara Temple Orphanage		Murugamoorthi Thirukkovil Endowment	
Komalam Nair	499.00	Rajendra Giri	110.00	Michael Zimmermann	6.00	N. Balasubramanian	100,000.00
Arunachalam Natesan	501.00	Hiranya Gowda	63.00			Panchangam Endowment Fund	
Lakshmi Valli Natesan	500.00	Total	173.00	Manjung Hindu Sabha Orphanage Fund		Usha & Srinivas Amble	25.00
Kirtideva Peruman	29.29	Loving Ganesha Distribution Fund		Silvarajoo Muniandy	15.00	Rangabashyam Gopalakrishnan	25.00
Niroshnee Peruman	34.17	Mano Navaratnarajah	225.00	Suhashini Muniandy	30.00	Alfiya Khasanova	30.00
Bharat Raval	499.00	Gassa Patten	900.00	Anonymous	1,067.60	Murali Krishna	50.00
Samyuktha Santhoshi Natesan	500.00	Total	1,125.00	Total	1,112.60	Priyaa & Santosh Prasad	25.00
Nilesh Shah	500.00	Saiva Agamas Trust		Pazhassi Balamandiram Orphanage Fund		Gayatri Rajan	25.00
Arvind Sharma	447.22	Ganga Sivanathan	210.00	Michael R. Eisen	25.00	Chittoor Ramachandran	30.00
Indrajeet Sikdar	499.00	Spiritual Park of Mauritius Endowment		Krishnakumar Upendranathan	50.00	Karen Yang	79.00
Logavalli Sinsamy	64.51	Anil Kumar	36.00	Total	75.00	Total	289.00
Nutanaya Sivaceyon	92.40	Hindu Heritage Endowment Administrative Fund		Karnataka Temple Development Fund		Digital Dharma Endowment	
Potriyan Sivanathan	27.82	Rama Reddy	101.00	Michael R. Eisen	25.00	Vidyl L. Krishnan	101.00
Bala Soobramanien	64.14	Kauai Aadheenam Religious Art and Artifacts Fund		Hiranya Gowda	500.00	Insurance Premium Donations	
Sridhar Srinivasan	499.00	Rajadeva Alahan	51.00	Total	525.00	Mrunal Patel	3,003.00
K. Subramaniam	499.00	A. Saravanapavan Family Murugan Temple Pillaiyar Shrine Fund		Swami Vipulananta Children's Home Endowment		Kauai Aadheenam Renovation Endowment	
V & Mangala Venkatesh	499.00	Michael R. Eisen	25.00	Anonymous	150.00	Other Donations	600.00
Total	8,771.97	Pathmini Saravanapavan	150.00	Hindu Literature Fund			
		Total	175.00	Rajagopal Krishnan	20.00	Total Contributions	\$290,501.90
Gurudeva's Trilogy Distribution Fund		Thank You Bodhinatha Fund		Hinduism Today Complimentary Subscription Fund		Funds at Market Value, Sep 30, 2013	
Vel Mahalingum	19.52	Hotranatha Ajaya	33.00	Hiranya Gowda	153.00	Grand Total	\$12,297,696.78
Manogaran Mardemootoo	48.82			Rajagopal Krishnan	20.00		
Total	68.34			Total	173.00		
Kailasa Peedam Gift Fund							
Michael R. Eisen	25.00						
Kadavul Nataraja Ardra Abhishekam Endowment							
Aravindraj Chandrasekaran	9.00						
Debashis Ghosh	80.00						
Prabhakar Goel	5,000.00						
Julia M. Hall	108.00						
Umasankaran Mohambourame	51.00						
Gowri Nadason	165.48						
Anonymous	559.31						
Parimala Selvaraj	93.00						
V.P. Shanmugham	108.00						
Bala Sivaceyon	10.00						
Total	6,183.79						
Kauai Aadheenam Matavasi Medical Fund							
Amarnath & Latha Devarmanai	202.00						

MISSION STATEMENT: Hindu Heritage Endowment is a publicly supported, charitable organization recognized as tax exempt by the IRS on April 22, 1994. Employer ID 99-0308924. Founded by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, its philanthropic mission is to provide secure, professionally managed financial support for institutions and religious leaders of all lineages of Sanatana Dharma.



Your Hawaiian Pilgrimage Destination

Visit the spectacular gold-domed, all-white-granite *Iraivan Temple* being constructed at Kauai's Hindu Monastery—from stones quarried and hand-carved in India. Bring the children.

Read more, see photos, videos and/or donate at:

himalayanacademy.com/iraivan.org
808-822-3012, x237 • iraivan@hindu.org

HAWAII HEAVEN



Ask us for regular email updates about Kauai's real estate markets, including investment possibilities and new listings near Kauai's Hindu Monastery.

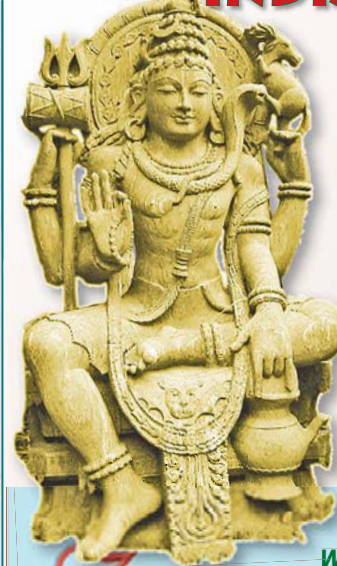
Yelena Okhman Realtor®(S) • Remax Kauai
808-635-6552 • Yelena.Okhman@remax.net



Crystal Ganeshas All sizes

minimela.com
books@hindu.org
877-255-1510

SACRED STATUES & ART FROM INDIA & TIBET



This 5-foot tall sandstone Shiva and other fine, hand-carved statues are available in the USA, now, ready to be shipped anywhere.

713-668-2948
concept@wt.net
www.hindugods.net

We specialize in orders from monasteries & temples

Laposh India

THE FINEST COLLECTION OF ANTIQUES & ART FROM INDIA, TIBET AND NEPAL

We offer group tours to visit temples in INDIA



Life Insurance and Estate Planning

Rely on a professional for Retirement and Estate Planning

For information, contact one of the most highly trained financial advisors:

Niraj P. Baxi, msi, clu, chfc
Tel: 800-686-8436
niraj@baxifinancial.com
www.baxifinancial.com



Vedic Yagya Center

Traditional Vedic Yagyas Performed by Expert Vedic Pandits

Special upcoming events:

- VYC invites you to participate in a powerful and elaborate, daily devotional event, the *Sri Sudarshana Chandi Pashupata Sahita Mahanyasa Poorvaka Ekadasha Rudrabhishekam* that we will perform for 365 consecutive days, Nov 17, 2013 to Nov 16, 2014
- Additionally, VYC will be performing Sri Ganesha, Sudarshana, Maha Lakshmi, Chandi, Navagraha homas once a month on Maasa Sivaratri (Pradosha) for a whole year. Please contact us for more information.

We also offer Yagyas for:

- Daily Rudrabhishekam & Chandi Parayanam \$108.00/mo/person or \$151.00/family
- Daily Welfare Yagyas to improve day to day life
- Customized Yagyas to fit your needs as per natal chart & astrology
- Vastu rectification, residential & commercial land & property

Learn more:

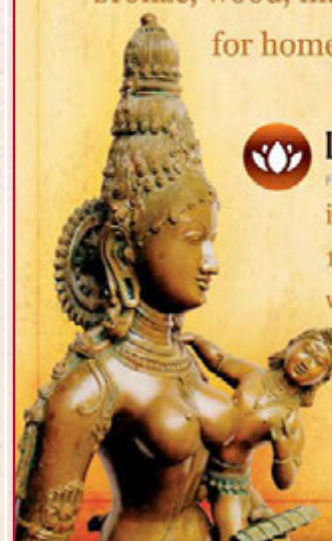
- Contact us for pricing for the above services
- We can perform Yagyas for you anywhere in the world
- View our Yagyas & events: www.youtube.com/user/samavedula/videos
- Visit our website for more details



Pandit Samavedula
888-835-7788 • fax: 512-788-5694
cs@vydic.org • vyc@vydicfoundation.org
www.vedicyagyacenter.com

Masterpiece Quality Hindu Sculpture

Offering fine handmade bronze, wood, marble & stone murtis for homes & temples



LOTUS SCULPTURE

FINE HINDU & BUDDHIST STATUES

info@lotussculpture.com

1 (760) 994-4455

www.lotussculpture.com

Enlightenment Podcast



"The doors to living an enlightened life open with the keys of silence and just being. Leave your thoughts behind and enter." Dr. Robert Puff, author of *Spiritual Enlightenment: Awakening to the Supreme Reality*.

Free articles and podcasts on Nonduality

Dr. Robert Puff
www.EnlightenmentPodcast.com

Jyotish Vachaspathi R. G. Krishnan

Details of the services rendered by Jyotish Vachaspathi R. G. Krishnan and articles published by him in regard to Stock Market and other astrological matters may be seen at:

<http://rgkrishnan.com>

He may be contacted at:

jyotish@juno.com

tel.: 972-881-3751 • cellular: 469-879-5107



Prasannan Jyotish

Prasannan is a master of Hindu Astrology (Jyotish), who has conducted over 50,000 readings, for clients worldwide, since 1992.

Consultations are available, by phone or email.

For more information, contact:

prasannanjyotish@gmail.com

USA: 1-603-736-7776

Canada: 1-604-360-3833

www.prasannanjyotish.com



TIRUMANDIRAM



The Tirumandiram, is a sacred, monumental work of philosophical and spiritual wisdom rendered in verse form. Encyclopedic in scope, and written nearly 2,000 years ago, it is one of India's greatest texts, a spiritual treasure-trove, containing astonishing insight. It is the first treatise in Tamil that deals with different aspects of Yoga, Tantra and Saiva Siddhantha.

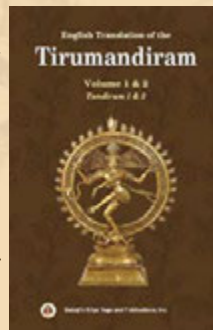
Published in five hard bound volumes, containing a total of 3,770 pages, each of its more than 3,000 verses includes the original Tamil language script, its transliteration in Roman characters, its English translation and an extensive commentary. There is also a glossary, a select bibliography and index.

Order at: <http://goo.gl/AJrzpA>

Babaji's Kriya Yoga and Publications, Inc.

1-888-252-9642, 1-450-297-0258

www.babajiskriyayoga.net



Make your home
sweeter than ever

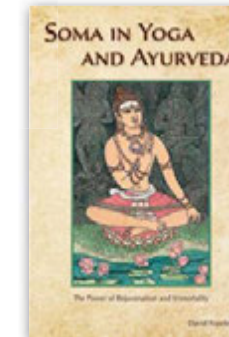
with this wooden om
plaque laser-etched by the monks
of Kauai's Hindu Monastery.
www.minimela.com/omsweetom

Lotus Press • Lotus Press • Lotus Press • Lotus Press • Lotus Press

SOMA IN YOGA AND AYURVEDA

The Power of Rejuvenation and Immortality

David Frawley (Vamadeva Shastri)



ISBN: 978-0-9406-7621-3
\$19.95 • 392 Pages

What is the secret of Soma, the legendary mystic drink of immortality, first lauded by India's ancient Vedic seers? Is Soma a single plant, a type of plants, a way of healing, a special intoxicant, or an inner elixir produced by Yoga and meditation?

Going back to the vision of the Vedic seers, David Frawley reveals the secret of Soma for body, mind and spirit, with its profound implications from diet and herbs to pranayama, mantra and meditation. His new analysis of Soma, reflecting forty years of study of Vedic texts, is practical, comprehensive and deeply insightful – so that you can bring the secret power of Soma into all aspects of your life and consciousness, and for the world as a whole.

Lotus Press, Inc., a majority woman-owned, family business,
P O Box 325, Twin Lakes, WI 53181 USA • Office Phone: 262 889 8561
Office Fax: 262 889 2461 • Toll Free Order Line: 800 824 6396
Email: lotuspress@lotuspress.com • Website: www.lotuspress.com
Pandit Vamadeva Shastri • www.vedanet.com

Lotus Press • Lotus Press • Lotus Press • Lotus Press • Lotus Press



! Ganesh Mall

A website dedicated to

awe-inspiring

Ganesh Statues
Ganesh Art
Jewelry



www.ganeshmall.com



Connect to Radiant Health with
AYURVEDA

evolve
NATURALLY
Bringing Ayurveda
& Yoga to Life

Learn to live a healthier, happier,
more satisfying life with our
10 online video lessons.
Apply Ayurveda's ancient
principles in your life,
one easy step at a time.

www.evovenaturally.com

TRIHEALTH

AYURVEDIC OIL THERAPIES & HERBAL REMEDIES

Thailams

Herbally infused Massage Oils

Rich in antioxidants and
nutrients for skin health

Perfect for Abhyanga Massage
for yourself and others

Restorative and balancing from
head to toe

Made with authentic classical
Ayurvedic formulas



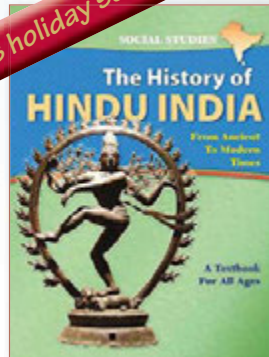
See our complete line of herbal remedies
at www.trihealthayurveda.com

For Spa services on Kauai view www.trihealthayurvedaspa.com

Order line: 1-800-455-0770

Mention HT ad for a free sample with your next web order

This holiday season



Give
your kids
the gift of
knowledge
& pride

The editors of **Hinduism Today**, in collaboration with USA's foremost historian of India, created *The History of Hindu India*, a comprehensive school textbook covering ancient to modern times. Let your kids learn of their heritage in an accurate, unbiased and engaging way. Abundantly illustrated, concise, and clear—as you would expect of **Hinduism Today**. Youngsters love it, and so do adults. More at:

minimela.com • 877-255-1510

Experience a Living Tradition

Our Ayurvedic Studies Programs bring Ayurveda to life in the depth of your being. Experience firsthand this living wisdom as it unfolds in your life and expresses in your practice. Come for the knowledge and stay for the wisdom.



Ayurvedic Seminars & Intensives Offered Throughout the Year

American Institute of Vedic Studies

Expand your horizons in Vedic and Hindu Dharma. Practical teachings of Pandit Vamadeva Shastri (David Frawley). Authentic Vedic knowledge in a clear and modern idiom. Courses, publications, programs and retreats—with students from all over the world.



Recent books:

- *Soma in Yoga and Ayurveda*
- *Mantra Yoga and Primal Sound*
- *Inner Tantric Yoga*
- *Hinduism, the Eternal Tradition (Sanatana Dharma)*
- *Hidden Horizons: Unearthing 10,000 Years of Indian Culture*

Courses from the Institute:

- Ayurvedic Healing Course in Ayurvedic Medicine
- Advanced Yoga & Ayurveda Course
- Vedic Astrology and Ayurveda Course

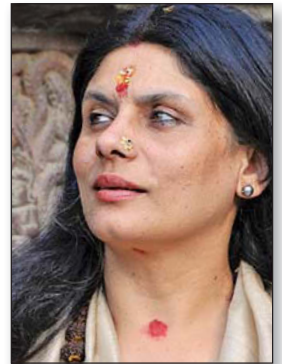
American Institute of Vedic Studies
PO Box 8357, Santa Fe, NM 87504-8357 USA
tel: 505-983-9385 • www.vedanet.com

(Note our on-line articles, books and Vedic resource guide)

Yogini Shambhavi

Yogini Shambhavi is one of the most dynamic women spiritual teachers from India in recent years.

Her best-selling books, *Yogini: Unfolding the Goddess Within* (Lotus Press) and *Yogic Secrets of the Dark Goddess* (Lotus Press) continue to inspire readers worldwide. She draws one to the deeper "Yogic Reality," awakening the Shakti power within us.



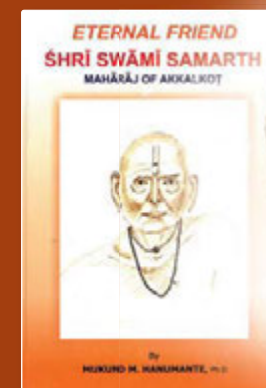
- Ma Ganga Yoga Shakti Retreat above Rishikesh, March 8-14, 2013
- Jyotir Bhava CD: *Sacred Chants for the Nine Planets* (Lotus Press)
- Yoga Shakti Retreat, Adrasan, Turkey, Nov 18-25, 2013
- Yogini Bhava CD: *Sacred Chants to Shiva and Shakti* (Lotus Press)
- Vedic astrology consultations with Yogini Shambhavi based upon and the Goddess tradition for spiritual guidance and all life issues

shambhavi.yogini@gmail.com • www.vedanet.com

Kauai's Hindu Monastery Rudraksha Heaven

Most of our rudraksha seeds and rudraksha items are grown in the monastery's rudraksha forest, prepared by devotees and blessed by our monks. We also have beads, malas and jewelry from India, including a spectacular collector's set of single-to 13-faced beads. See them all at minimela.com.

books@hindu.org • 877-255-1510



Befriend the Divine.

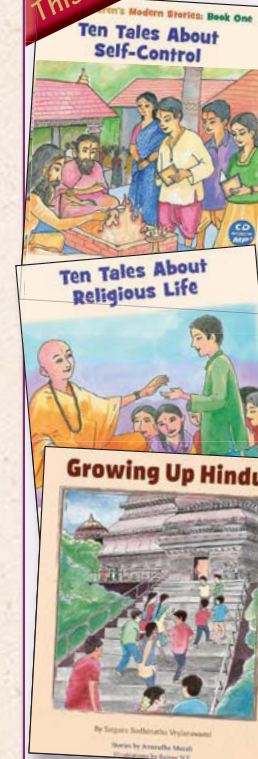
Eternal Friend gives you the keys to the Divine within—always there for you, ever ready to help you attain peace and contentment.

"*Eternal Friend* is the doorway to auspiciousness and infinite peace."—*Shri Sathya Sai Baba*

"Helps people manifest their deepest soul potentials."—*Dr. David Frawley*

By M. Hanumante, PhD • 142 p • hardcover • color • \$35
www.swamisamarthofakkalkot.org • mukund@juno.com

This holiday season



Teach
your kids
character-building
in a light-hearted
and fun way

Here is a pleasant approach to dharmic living that kids appreciate. These three *Modern Tales* books consist of 30 engaging stories by Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, publisher of *Hinduism Today*. The books come with an audio CD by a professional narrator. Youngsters love them!

www.minimela.com
877-255-1510 • books@hindu.org

CLASSIFIED

Classified ads are us\$52 for 20 words, \$1 for each additional word. "Box ads" are \$75 and \$140 • 10% to 35% discount for repeat ads • 888-464-1008, cell: 808-634-5407 fax: 808-822-3152 • ads@hindu.org www.hinduismtoday.com (click "advertise")

Appeal

Support this magazine—give to the Hinduism Today Production Fund. www.HHEonline.org 888-464-1008 • jothi@hindu.org

Astrology

Vedic astrology

Insights and solutions by Acharya Bharat—Brahmin priest & college lecturer on Hinduism. Emphasis on traditions, such as homa and gem therapy.



503-591-0984
bharatji108@gmail.com
www.PadminiLight.com

Ayurveda/Health

Low-cost blood test by mail. Eg., PSA, \$10, HIV screen, \$10 • www.LowCostBloodTest.org or Call Dr. Siva, tel: 1-866-505-1556 (USA).

Bali — Ashram

Ashram in Ubud, Bali

Spiritual seekers welcome. Meditation, satsang, kirtan. Comfy rooms, veg. meals. ubud.anandashram.asia +62-817-743-769



Devotional Supplies

Holy Smokes! Incense

Made entirely of natural essential oils, resins, herbs, spices & plant extracts. Suppliers to Kauai's Hindu Monastery • alahan@me.com



Top Quality Rudraksha beads and malas Jai Hanuman Ltd. • gdg4044@yahoo.com 641-472-2448 • www.rudraksha.com

Free Products and Services

Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj Meditation

Blessings. Peace, Bliss and Self-Realization Guaranteed through Meditation. Receive Shivabalayogi's photo, holy ash and meditation instructions. Free. Germaine, 108 Yogaville Way, Buckingham, VA 23921 USA. germaineamma@hotmail.com www.meditate-shivabala.org

Discover the Self...

...as you listen to *The Secret Path* and *Discover Yourself*, two books by Paul Brunton, one of the great teachers of Hinduism of the XXth Century. A free audio stream read by Superman actor Christopher Reeve.

More at: www.PaulBrunton.org



Hawaii—Rentals

Studio Near Hindu Monastery

A one-minute walk to beautiful Kauai's Hindu Monastery from our charming studio. Peaceful tropical setting for one or two (w children, ok). Private entrance, deck, bath, fully equipped kitchenette, wifi, cable TV.

970-390-0456 • 808-431-4219
alahan@me.com



Professional Products/Services

Fine Quality Neem Products

Living neem trees, fresh branches, twigs or leaves. Complete line of neem products including cold-pressed oil, soaps, cream, shampoo, salve and certified-organic extract and capsules, all at fresh-from-the-farm prices • 813-661-8873 www.neemtreefarms.com 601 Southwood Cove Brandon, FL 33511 USA



Indoor/outdoor painting—No. California Residential, commercial, interior & exterior. Color consulting. Licensed, bonded & insured. Vama's Painting Co., 925-279-1051.

Freight Forwarder

Ship >45 kg or more Anywhere from US Fx: 1-800-396-6659 Sales2@air7seas.us www.air7seas.com



Publications

Dreaming Peace: Your Thoughts Can Change the World, and other inspirational writings by Nori Muster • Amazon.com, search "Nori Muster."

Sri Aurobindo books. Ayurveda. Reiki. Vedic astrology. Alternative health. Plus over 14,000 health & wellness products. Wholesale-retail-mail order. Free catalogs. Lotus Press, HT Box 1008, Silver Lake, WI 1008 USA www.lotuspress.com

Sri Chinmoy Books

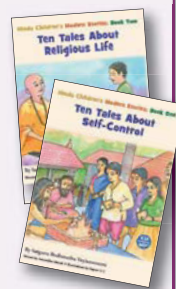
Wisdom of ancient India made clear and simple. Free catalog: 1-734-994-7114 www.Heart-Light.com www.SriChinmoy.org



Babaji's Kriya Yoga & Publications. See our e-commerce at www.babajiskriyayoga.net • Books, correspondence course, seminars. In India: india@babajiskriyayoga.net Outside of India: tel. 888-252-9642 or 450-297-0258; info@babajiskriyayoga.net

Modern storybooks for kids

Stories on how to live, collected by Hinduism Today's publisher—including audio CD by a professional narrator. Here is a lighthearted approach to dharmic living kids can relate to and appreciate. A great holiday season gift. www.minimela.com 877-255-1510 • books@hindu.org



History of Hindu India

A comprehensive school textbook (6th grade) created by Hinduism Today, covering Hindu history from ancient to modern times. Accurate, unbiased, illustrated, concise and clear. Give this gift of knowledge and pride to your kids. They love it. So do adults. 877-255-1510 • www.minimela.com



INSPIRED TEACHINGS IN THE KRIYA YOGA TRADITION

Roy Eugene Davis, Direct Disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda

www.csa-davis.org

Free *Truth Journal* magazine, booklets, video and audio talks. Articles in eight languages. Meditation retreat schedules. Order books, DVDs, CDs online.

Roy Eugene Davis has been teaching in North and South America, Europe, and India* for almost 60 years. He was ordained by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1951.



Center for Spiritual Awareness PO Box 7 Lakemont, Georgia 30552-0001

For **FREE** literature: info@csa-davis.org

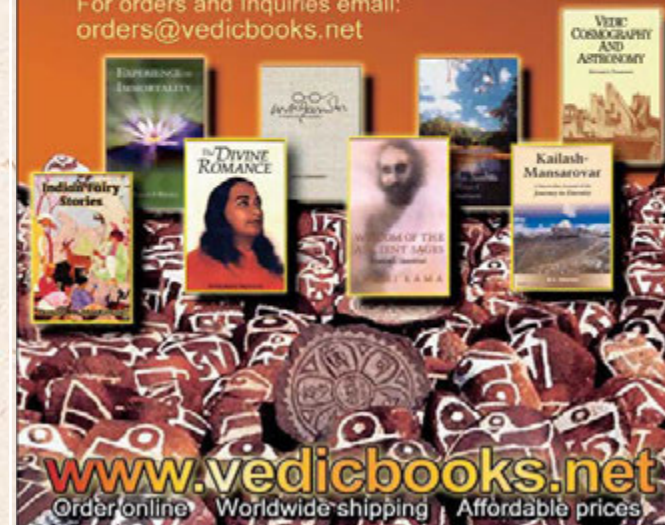
* In India many of Mr. Davis' books are published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi. At bookstores in several cities. www.mlbd.com

vedic books Online Bookstore

Direct from India at affordable prices

At Vedic Books, we have traveled the length and breadth of India to source the finest Indological books for your enjoyment. Our books come from publishers in the great Indian cities of Delhi and Calcutta and from far flung regions in Bihar and Kerala to name but a few. Our books travel right from their source, the home of traditional Vedic wisdom, right to your doorstep. Find books on healing, self-development and mystical sciences. Discover the ancient mother of all languages. Sanskrit. Find balance in your life through Ayurveda and Yoga.

For orders and inquiries email: orders@vedicbooks.net



New Hindu Global Charity

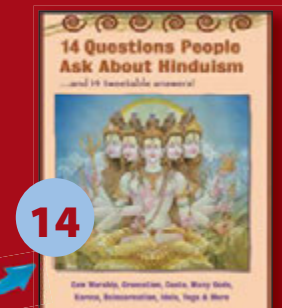
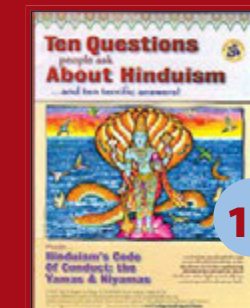


We are currently planning projects in nutrition and education for Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nigeria.

American Hindu World Service (AHWS) is a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to educating the American public and the world on Hindu perspectives on service. These can apply to areas such as nutrition/food security, water/sanitation, environmental issues, education, women's empowerment and microfinance. AHWS aims to work with other religious communities on interfaith issues, and serve without discrimination as to ethnicity, gender, nationality or creed. Learn more at www.ahwsngo.org.

AHWS • PO Box 1483, Laurel, MD 20725-1483, USA 626-475-7149 • ahwsngo@gmail.com

Embarrassing questions no more!



Our most popular publication, *Ten Questions that People Ask About Hinduism and Ten Terrific Answers* has just expanded to become: *14 Questions People Ask....* Here are simple, clear, golden answers to the common questions: why many Gods? do Hindus worship cows? why do some Gods have animal features? etc. Especially helpful for children in a non-Hindu setting.

www.minimela.com/booklets
books@hindu.org • 877-255-1510



Vegan Vitamins & Supplements

No animal products or derivatives of any kind

High quality
Wide selection
Affordable prices



...and many more!

Available for purchase at:
WHOLE FOODS & other
Natural Health Food Stores.

(888) 988-DEVA
www.devanutrition.com
info@devanutrition.com

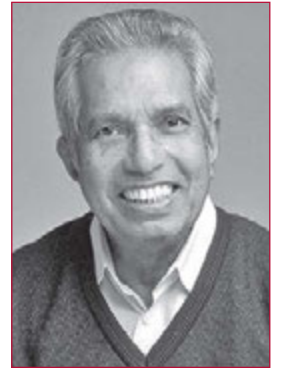


See
Lord Siva dance
all day long

Imagine this poster of the 108 poses of **Lord Siva's Cosmic Dance** on the wall of your home or office. It will remind you of your deepest beliefs and whisper insights and encouragements to you each time you glance in its direction. Created by the monks of Kauai's Hindu Monastery • 14 x 17 inches
www.minimela.com • books@hindu.org

Chakrapani Ullal, Vedic Astrology

World-renowned teacher and advisor, Chakrapani Ullal, consults internationally with people from all walks of life. As the founding honorary chairman of the ACVA (American Council of Vedic Astrology), he has played an active role in bringing together the Eastern Indian Vedic astrologers and Western astrologers. Considered a teacher of teachers, he travels widely as an author, lecturer and consultant.



Born into a traditional Hindu lineage of astrologers in South India, Chakrapani began his training at an early age and enjoyed associations with many of India's most revered and celebrated saints and sages. With over 45 years of experience, his depth of knowledge and unique understanding of how astrological principles apply to different cultures are sought out by people from all over the world. For more information and a schedule of his upcoming itinerary, please contact:

Chakrapani Ullal • PO Box 74427
Los Angeles, CA 90004 USA
tel: 323-962-9911 • fax: 323-962-9915
info@vedicastrology.com • www.chakrapani.com

MASTERY OF CONSCIOUSNESS TEACHINGS:

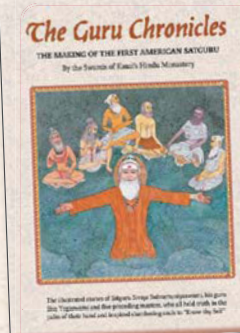
Using Mystical Yogic Tools of Self-Mastery



Mastery of Consciousness Retreat integrates the mystical teachings & daily practice of the Siddhar Sages as in yoga (Kalangi Kundalini Yoga; fire ceremony (Siddhar Yagna); intensified worship (Siddhar Puja) and an array of secretive teachings of empowerment with Tapasyogi Nandhi. The objective is to awaken the Master in you as your inspired personal daily inner journey that you will do.

Siddhar Sages are the liberated mystical yogis who journey beyond 'enlightenment'. The grace of self-knowledge, stillness and the highest purpose of life is attained through connecting to the Guru and the ancient lineage of light in experiential teachings of breath, resonance and yogic techniques.

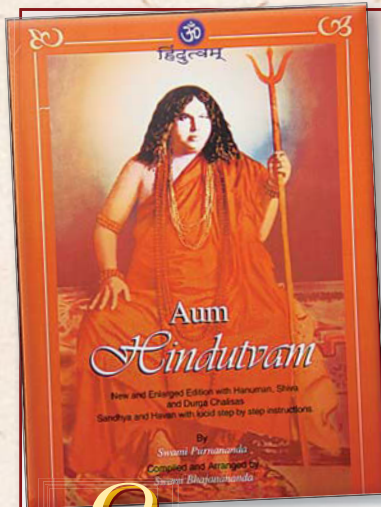
For more information:
<http://www.nandhi.com/masteryofconsciousness.htm>
awake@nandhi.com www.nandhi.com (310)-451-7577



The Guru Chronicles
by the monks of
Kauai's Hindu
Monastery

Delight in 800+ extraordinary pages of stories and teachings from the successive gurus of one of Hinduism's most respected spiritual lineages—going back 2,200 years.

The Guru Chronicles invites you to experience the ever blissful consciousness of these accomplished ones. Gain insights into life itself, the ultimate purpose of it all, who we are, where we're going and how we'll get there. Illustrated with spectacular watercolors by the great S.Rajam. No question: this is a watershed publication by the swamis, editors of Hinduism Today. Get it. Give it. Read it. Tell the stories, share the gems of wisdom. www.minimela.com/books



*Enrich
your
worship*

Enrich your temple or home shrine worship with this 460-page handbook of prayers & sacred knowledge—gathered by the swamis and gurus of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha (see Hinduism Today, Apr. 2010 issue). It is invaluable for anyone who wants to draw more from his faith, and ideal for introducing children to Sanatana Dharma.

- hundreds of slokas and their meanings
- Vedic havan mantras, sandhya, bhajans
- Hanuman Chalisa
- Shiva Chalisa
- Durga Chalisa
- 67 pg. of common questions & answers on Sanatana Dharma
- and much more

Available in new large and small editions.

www.pranavashram.com

416-741-4335 • 905-480-1156

SRI GAYATRI

The Inner Secrets Revealed

3 volumes with 2 chant CDs



Amma Sri Karunamayi explains the sacred Gayatri mantra, syllable by syllable, in this uplifting collection.

"Gayatri Devi is One who is self-luminous. She not only illumines all the organs and chakras in the bodies of humans and all living beings, She also gives light to all the worlds in the entire universe."



AMMA
SRI KARUNAMAYI
www.karunamayi.org

Check out these and other inspiring books and CDs at our website.



**Recover
& maintain
your health
by yourself,
at home**

During a lifetime of medical practice, Dr. Gowda MD observed that the ailments that burden people can almost always be improved or remedied easily by applying simple, basic principles and practices. He now shares his knowledge

with simple, easy practices that have proved effective for thousands of years

and experiences in highly illustrated *GYM3*. The title is an anagram referring to the three traditional practices: exercise, yoga and meditation.

106 pages • \$13.30, including shipping less for quantities • contact us:
2025 Priest Road, Nashville, TN 37215 USA
615-665-1565 • www.EntDrGowdaGYM3.com

VASTUVED INTERNATIONAL



Building design in the ancient tradition of Vastu Shastra
Residential and Commercial Properties
Comprehensive Vastu Design Theory and Application for Everyday Life

<http://www.vastu-design.com/vastu-architecture-book.php>
www.vastu-design.com 1-641-472-2157



Hindu American Foundation

Promoting Human Dignity, Mutual Respect, and Pluralism

**Together, let's instill
in our children a
pride of Hinduism.**

Like you, HAF wants Hindu American children to be proud of their traditions and heritage. HAF continues to ramp up its efforts to ensure that Hinduism is accurately and fairly represented in public school classrooms because

www.HAFsite.org

schools shape society's perception of all Hindus. HAF is not only working to improve textbooks, but is also providing teachers nationwide with Hinduism 101 trainings that are designed to help them better teach about Hinduism. Enter the world of HAF to find inspiration in an organization that advocates for you and your children by reaching out to academia, media, public policy leaders and interfaith groups.



910 17th St NW, Suite 1180
Washington, DC 20006

DIGITAL DHARMA

By Madhuri Shekhar, Los Angeles

HISTORY

The 1947 India Partition Project

WHEN INDIA GAINED INDEPENDENCE from the British Raj in August of 1947, one of the most difficult chapters of the country's recent history ensued. The partition of India and Pakistan led to a period of unimaginable violence and bloodshed. Over 10 million people were uprooted as families fled their ancestral homes—Hindus and Sikhs fleeing Pakistan, and Muslims exiting India—in one of humanity's largest forced migrations. Even today the death toll is unknown. Estimates range anywhere from 250,000 to 2 million—with the number of abductions, attacks, rapes and other brutalities far, far higher. History's few comparable tragedies, such as Rwanda in 1994 and the Holocaust in World War II, are well documented and taught in schools; but most people have only a vague sense of the horrific events of the Partition.

A project launched by research physicist Guneeta Singh Bhalla attempts to illuminate this dark corner of human history. Having heard many stories of the Partition from her grandmother, Bhalla felt compelled to make such accounts known before the sur-



SHOLAYEVENTS.COM

vivors have all passed on. The 1947 Partition Archive is an oral history narrated by the calamity's survivors in a series of personal interviews.

Project members interview survivors and their family members, neighbors, friends and acquaintances, asking them to share what they witnessed. Many have rarely talked about it before. These interviews can be overpowering, as survivors recount the terrible carnage they witnessed. They recall their shock and confusion as lifelong friends and neighbors suddenly turned against one another. But with every story of terror, there

www.hinduismtoday.com

Recording memories: Volunteers interview a man about his experiences during the Partition.

are moments of hope and courage. Survivor Ravi Chopra, for instance, tells how his family survived their journey from Pakistan to India only because a Muslim man concealed them when a bloodthirsty mob boarded their train.

These videos also serve as a testament to the strength, dig-

nity and grace of the survivors. Interviewee Shane Ali recounts the awful story of his family's being killed in front of him. But his testament ends with a powerful message: "For me—to forgive and move on was the only way. And the only way to do that was to not hate anybody. My own way of thinking is—love everyone, hate no one."

Several of the project's videos and stories are available online already. The full works will be made available soon. Visit bit.ly/1947archives to find out more about the 1947 Partition Archive and learn how you can get involved.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Connecting Hindus Through Facebook

ALTHOUGH FACEBOOK HAS SEEN A DECLINE in active accounts over the last year, it still supports over one billion users. Facebook's social networking continues to be one of the largest in the world and, appropriately, millions of Hindus are using the site to help create, connect and maintain their diverse communities. Today, India has 43 million users, a number second only to the US.

Temples worldwide utilize Facebook to keep devotees informed of the latest news and happenings. A Hindu temple in Spain posts updates, alerting its community to the temple's events, while across the globe, Hindu temples in Los Angeles encourage

their followers to post pictures or videos from temple gatherings. The Nyama Braya Bali group, started by Balinese Hindus in Germany, began with just twelve people, and has united over 600 Hindus in their area for community gatherings and ceremonies.

Facebook is also a powerful tool for Hindu communities such as the Pakistan Hindu Seva (facebook.com/PHS.Welfare.Trust), which serves as a hub for the Hindu minority in Pakistan. Groups such as the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, USA, present a broad view of activities across America, as do many others, who have created Facebook groups to maintain their communities at a local level.



SHUTTERSTOCK

Linked: A young Hindu explores group discussions, temple events and chats with other like-minded youth